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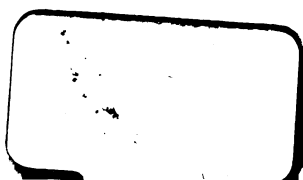
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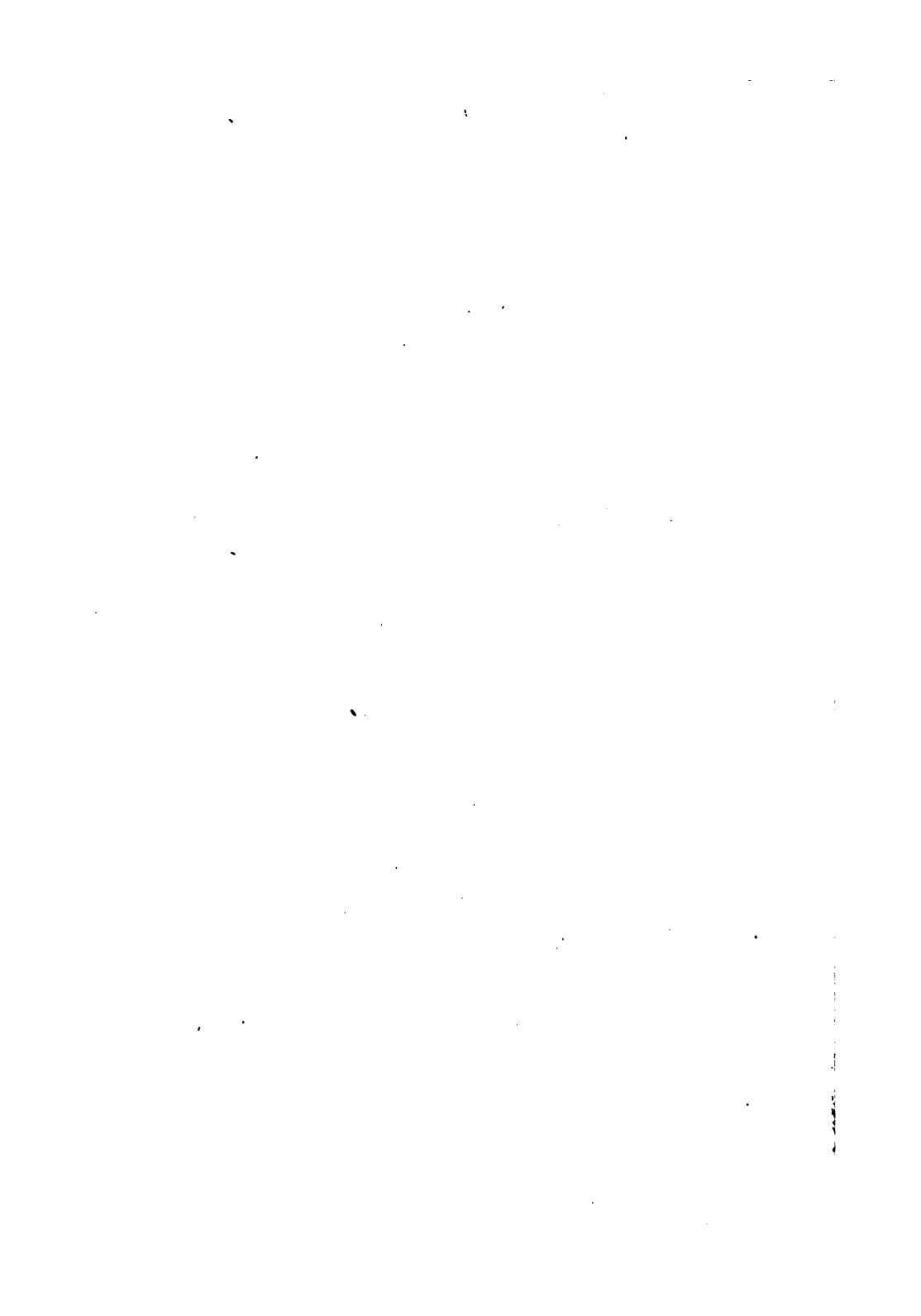
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POPE ABUSING CIBBER BEHIND THE SCENES.

JOHNSON'S LIVES
OF THE
BRITISH POETS

Completed by
WILLIAM HAZLITT.



IN FOUR VOLUMES.—VOL. III.

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THE

LIVES OF THE BRITISH POETS.



JONATHAN SWIFT.*

(1667-1745.)

AN account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteness, by Dr. Hawkesworth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship. I cannot, therefore, be expected to say much of a life concerning which I had long since communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narration with so much elegance of language and force of sentiment.

Jonathan Swift was, according to an account said to be written by himself,† the son of Jonathan Swift, an attorney; and was born at Dublin, on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leicester, the son of a clergyman, who was minister of a parish in Herefordshire. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Irishman by the Irish, but would occasionally call himself an Englishman. The question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it.

Whatever was his birth, his education was Irish. He was sent at the age of six to the school of Kilkenny; and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the University of Dublin.

In his academical studies he was either not diligent or not happy. It must disappoint every reader's expectation, that when at the usual time he claimed the bachelorship of arts, he was found by the examiners too conspicuously deficient for regular admission, and obtained his degree at last by 'special favour,'—a term used in that University to denote want of merit.

* Johnson.

† Mr. Sheridan, in his Life of Swift, observes that this account was really written by the Dean, and now exists in his own handwriting in the library of Dublin College.

Of this disgrace it may be easily supposed that he was much ashamed; and shame had its proper effect in producing reformation. He resolved from that time to study eight hours a day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. This part of his story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to many men, whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.

In this course of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the observation and memory of an old companion may be trusted, he drew the first sketch of his *Tale of a Tub*.



JONATHAN SWIFT.

When he was about one-and-twenty (1688), being by the death of Godwin Swift, his uncle, who had supported him, left without subsistence, he went to consult his mother, who then lived at Leicester, about the future course of his life; and by her direction solicited the advice and patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whose father, Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendship with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.

Temple received with sufficient kindness the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they conversed together, so much pleased that he detained him two years in his house. Here

he became known to King William, who sometimes visited Temple when he was disabled by the gout; and, being attended by Swift in the garden, showed him how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expressed his kindness to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horse.

When Temple removed to Moor Park, he took Swift with him; and when he was consulted by the Earl of Portland about the expedience of complying with a bill then depending for making parliaments triennial, against which King William was strongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to show the earl that the proposal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he sent Swift for the same purpose to the king. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of displaying them, made totally ineffectual by the pre-determination of the king; and used to mention this disappointment as his first antidote against vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a disorder, as he thought, by eating too much fruit. The origin of diseases is commonly obscure. Almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The disease of Swift was giddiness with deafness, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, pursued him through life, and at last sent him to the grave deprived of reason.

Being much oppressed at Moor Park by this grievous malady, he was advised to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but finding no benefit, returned to Sir William, at whose house he continued his studies, and is known to have read, among other books, *Cyprian* and *Irenæus*. He thought exercise of great necessity, and used to run half a mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is easy to imagine that the mode in which his first degree was conferred, left him no great fondness for the University of Dublin; and therefore he resolved to become a master of arts at Oxford. In the testimonial which he produced, the words of disgrace were omitted; and he took his master's degree (July 5th, 1692) with such reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he used to pay his mother at Leicester a yearly visit. He travelled on foot, unless some violence of weather drove him into a wagon; and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchased clean sheets for sixpence. This practice Lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of grossness and vulgarity: some may ascribe it to his desire of surveying human life through all its varieties; and others, perhaps with equal probability, to a passion which seems to have been deeply fixed in his heart, the love of a shilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor Park deserved some other recompense than the pleasure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's conversation; and grew so impatient, that (1694) he went away in discontent.

Temple, conscious of having given reason for complaint, is said to have made him Deputy Master of the Rolls in Ireland; which, according to his kinsman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to discharge. Swift therefore resolved to enter the church,

in which he had at first no higher hopes than of the chaplainship to the factory at Lisbon; but being recommended to Lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of Kilroot in Connor, of about a hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift so necessary, that he invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment in exchange for the prebend, which he desired him to resign. With this request Swift quickly complied, having perhaps equally repented their separation; and they lived on together with mutual satisfaction; and in the four years that passed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*.

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet; and wrote Pindaric odes to Temple, to the king, and to the Athenian Society,—a knot of obscure men,* who published a periodical pamphlet of answers to questions sent, or supposed to be sent, by letters. I have been told that Dryden, having perused these verses, said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuscripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained from King William a promise of the first prebend that should be vacant at Westminster or Canterbury.

That this promise might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the king the posthumous works with which he was intrusted; but neither the dedication, nor tenderness for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondness, revived in King William the remembrance of his promise. Swift awhile attended the court, but soon found his solicitations hopeless.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkeley to accompany him into Ireland, as his private secretary; but after having done the business till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one Bush had persuaded the earl that a clergyman was not a proper secretary, and had obtained the office for himself. In a man like Swift, such circumvention and inconstancy must have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to suffer. Lord Berkeley had the disposal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the secretary's influence, supposed to have been secured by a bribe, it was bestowed on somebody else; and Swift was dismissed with the livings of Laracor and Rathbeggin in the diocese of Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increased the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profession with great decency and exactness.

Soon after his settlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whose name was Johnson, the daughter of the steward of Sir William Temple, who, in consideration of her father's virtues, left her a thousand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whose whole fortune was twenty-seven pounds a year for her life. With these ladies he passed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened his bosom; but they never resided in the same

* The publisher of this collection was John Dunton.

house, nor did he see either without a witness. They lived at the parsonage when Swift was away; and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a neighbouring clergyman.

Swift was not one of those minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his first work, except his few poetical essays, was the *Dissensions in Athens and Rome*, published (1701) in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a visit to some bishop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he seemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work, he was told by the bishop, that he was "a young man;" and still persisting to doubt, that he was "a very positive young man."

Three years afterwards (1704) was published the *Tale of a Tub*. Of this book charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written, by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention; but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be universally believed, was never owned by himself, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced; and he did not deny it when Archbishop Sharpe and the Duchess of Somerset, by showing it to the queen, debarred him from a bishopric.

When this wild work first raised the attention of the public, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him by seeming to think him the author; but Smalridge answered with indignation, "Not all that you and I have in the world, nor all that ever we shall have, should hire me to write the *Tale of a Tub*."

The digressions relating to Wotton and Bentley must be confessed to discover want of knowledge or want of integrity: he did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them. But wit can stand its ground against truth only a little while. The honours due to learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.

The *Battle of the Books* is so like the *Combat des Livres*, which the same question concerning the ancients and moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of such a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous protestation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily disowned.

For some time after, Swift was probably employed in solitary study, gaining the qualifications requisite for further eminence. How often he visited England, and with what diligence he attended his parishes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards that he became a professed author; and then one year (1708) produced the *Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man*; the ridicule of astrology, under the name of "Bickerstaff;" the *Argument against abolishing Christianity*; and the defence of the *Sacramental Test*.

The *Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man* is written with great coolness, moderation, ease, and perspicuity. The *Argument against abolishing Christianity* is a very happy and judicious irony. One passage in it deserves to be selected:

"If Christianity were once abolished, how could the free-thinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to

find another subject so calculated, in all points, whereon to display their abilities? What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those whose genius, by continual practice, hath been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distinguish themselves upon any other subject? We are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would take away the greatest, perhaps the only topic we have left. Who would ever have suspected Asgill for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand to provide them with materials? What other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? It is the wise choice of the subject that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For had an hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion."

The reasonableness of a test is not hard to be proved; but perhaps it must be allowed that the proper test has not been chosen.

The attention paid to the papers published under the name of "Bickerstaff," induced Steele, when he projected *The Tailor*, to assume an appellation which had already gained possession of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, addressed to Lady Berkeley, by whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is formed with great purity of intention, and displayed with sprightliness and elegance, it can only be objected that, like many projects, it is, if not generally impracticable, yet evidently hopeless, as it supposes more zeal, concord, and perseverance, than a view of mankind gives reason for expecting.

He wrote likewise this year a *Vindication of Bickerstaff*; and an *Explanation of an ancient Prophecy*, part written after the facts, and the rest never completed, but well planned to excite amazement.

Soon after began the busy and important part of Swift's life. He was employed (1710) by the Primate of Ireland to solicit the queen for a remission of the first-fruits and twentieth-parts to the Irish clergy. With this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley, to whom he was mentioned as a man neglected and oppressed by the last ministry, because he had refused to co-operate with some of their schemes. What he had refused, has never been told; what he had suffered, was, I suppose, the exclusion from a bishopric by the remonstrances of Sharpe, whom he describes as "the harmless tool of others' hate," and whom he represents as afterwards "suing for pardon."

Harley's designs and situation were such as made him glad of an auxiliary so well qualified for his service; he therefore soon admitted him to familiarity, whether ever to confidence some have made a doubt; but it would have been difficult to excite his zeal without persuading him that he was trusted, and not very easy to delude him by false persuasions.

He was certainly admitted to those meetings in which the first hints and original plan of action are supposed to have been formed;

and was one of the sixteen ministers, or agents of the ministry, who met weekly at each other's houses, and were united by the name of "brother."

Being not immediately considered as an obdurate Tory, he conversed indiscriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in *The Tatler*, which began in April 1709, confesses the advantage of his conversation, and mentions something contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immersing into political controversy; for the year 1710 produced *The Examiner*, of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide system of conduct and the whole of a public character is laid open to inquiry, the accuser having the choice of facts, must be very unskilful if he does not prevail: but with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to those by which Addison opposed him.*

He wrote in the year 1711 a *Letter to the October Club*; a number of Tory gentlemen sent from the country to parliament, who formed themselves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raise the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reason, that the ministers were losing opportunities—that sufficient use was not made of the ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes and stronger efforts; and demanded the punishment of part, and the dismissal of the rest of those whom they considered as public robbers.

Their eagerness was not gratified by the queen or by Harley. The queen was probably slow because she was afraid; and Harley was slow because he was doubtful: he was a Tory only by necessity or for convenience; and when he had power in his hands, had no settled purpose for which he should employ it: forced to gratify to a certain degree the Tories who supported him, but unwilling to make his reconciliation to the Whigs utterly desperate, he corresponded at once with the two expectants of the crown, and kept, as has been observed, the succession undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing; and, with the fate of a double dealer, at last he lost his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift seems to have concurred in opinion with the October Club; but it was not in his power to quicken the tardiness of Harley, whom he stimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move. Harley, who was perhaps not quick by nature, became yet more slow by irresolution; and was content to hear that dilatoriness lamented as natural, which he applauded in himself as politic.

Without the Tories, however, nothing could be done; and as they were not to be gratified, they must be appeased; and the conduct of the minister, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plausibly excused.

Early in the next year he published a *Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue*, in a letter to the Earl of Oxford; written without much knowledge of the general nature

* Mr. Sheridan, however, says, that Addison's last *Whig Examiner* was published Oct. 12, 1711; and Swift's first *Examiner* on the 10th of the following November.

of language, and without any accurate inquiry into the history of other tongues. The certainty and stability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he proposes to secure by instituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud, to disobey; and which, being renewed by successive elections, would in a short time have differed from itself.

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he published (1712) the *Conduct of the Allies*, ten days before the parliament assembled. The purpose was to persuade the nation to a peace; and never had any writer more success. The people, who had been amused with bonfires and triumphal processions, and looked with idolatry on the general and his friends, who, as they thought, had made England the arbitress of nations, were confounded between shame and rage when they found that "mines had been exhausted, and millions destroyed," to secure the Dutch, or aggrandise the emperor, without any advantage to ourselves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their own quarrel; and that amongst our enemies we might number our allies.

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then first informed, that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I suppose, did not yet know what he has since written, that a commission was drawn which would have appointed him general for life, had it not become ineffectual by the resolution of Lord Cowper, who refused the seal.

"Whatever is received," say the schools, "is received in proportion to the recipient." The power of a political treatise depends much upon the disposition of the people: the nation was then combustible, and a spark set it on fire. It is boasted, that between November and January eleven thousand were sold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furnished arguments for conversation, speeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary resolutions.

Yet surely whoever surveys this wonder-working pamphlet with cool perusal, will confess that its efficacy was supplied by the passions of its readers; that it operates by the mere weight of facts, with very little assistance from the hand that produced them.

This year (1712) he published his *Reflections on the Barrier Treaty*; which carries on the design of his *Conduct of the Allies*, and shows how little regard in that negotiation had been shown to the interest of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by *Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction to his third Volume of the History of the Reformation*; a pamphlet which Burnet published as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of popery. Swift, who seems to have disliked the bishop with something more than political aversion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to insult.

Swift, being now the declared favourite and supposed confidant of

the Tory ministry, was treated by all that depended on the court with the respect which dependents know how to pay. He soon began to feel part of the misery of greatness; he that could say that he knew him, considered himself as having fortune in his power. Commissions, solicitations, remonstrances, crowded about him; he was expected to do every man's business; to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In assisting those who addressed him, he represents himself as sufficiently diligent, and desires to have others believe, what he probably believed himself, that by his interposition many Whigs of merit, and among them Addison and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has so many petitions which he cannot grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he gratifies, as the preference given to one affords all the rest reason for complaint. "When I give away a place," said Louis XIV., "I make an hundred discontented, and one ungrateful."

Much has been said of the equality and independence which he preserved in his conversation with the ministers, of the frankness of his remonstrances, and the familiarity of his friendship. In accounts of this kind a few single incidents are set against the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more servile tribute to the great, than by suffering his liberty in their presence to aggrandise him in his own esteem. Between different ranks of the community there is necessarily some distance: he who is called by his superior to pass the interval, may properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtrusion are rarely produced by magnanimity, nor have often any nobler cause than the pride of importance and the malice of inferiority. He who knows himself necessary, may set, while that necessity lasts, a high value upon himself: as, in a lower condition, a servant eminently skilful may be saucy; but he is saucy only because he is servile. Swift appears to have preserved the kindness of the great when they wanted him no longer; and therefore it must be allowed, that the childish freedom, to which he seems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His disinterestedness has been likewise mentioned—a strain of heroism which would have been in his condition romantic and superfluous. Ecclesiastical benefices, when they become vacant, must be given away; and the friends of power may, if there be no inherent disqualification, reasonably expect them. Swift accepted (1713) the deanery of St. Patrick, the best preferment that his friends could venture* to give him. That ministry was in a great degree supported by the clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the *Tale of a Tub*; and would not, without much discontent and indignation, have borne to see him installed in an English cathedral.

He refused, indeed, fifty pounds from Lord Oxford; but he accepted afterwards a draught of a thousand upon the Exchequer, which was intercepted by the queen's death, and which he resigned, as he says himself, "*multa gemens*, with many a groan."

In the midst of his power and his politics, he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with ministers, and quarrels with

* This emphatic word has not escaped the watchful eye of Dr. Warton, who has placed a *nota bene* at it.

his servant; and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befel him was interesting, and no accounts could be too minute. Whether these diurnal trifles were properly exposed to eyes which had never received any pleasure from the presence of the Dean, may be reasonably doubted: they have, however, some odd attraction; the reader, finding frequent mention of names which he has been used to consider as important, goes on in hope of information; and as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is disappointed he can hardly complain. It is easy to perceive from every page, that though ambition pressed Swift into a life of bustle, the wish for a life of ease was always returning.

He went to take possession of his deanery as soon as he had obtained it; but he was not suffered to stay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increased, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his last years.

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed discontented; he procured a second, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcilable: he told them his opinion, that all was lost. This denunciation was contradicted by Oxford; but Bolingbroke whispered that he was right.

Before this violent dissension had shattered the ministry, Swift had published in the beginning of the year (1714), *The Public Spirit of the Whigs*, in answer to *The Crisis*, a pamphlet for which Steele was expelled from the House of Commons. Swift was now so far alienated from Steele, as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and therefore treats him sometimes with contempt, and sometimes with abhorrence.

In this pamphlet the Scotch were mentioned in terms so provoking to that irritable nation, that, resolving "not to be offended with impunity," the Scotch lords in a body demanded an audience of the queen, and solicited reparation. A proclamation was issued, in which 300*l.* were offered for the discovery of the author. From this storm he was, as he relates, "secured by a sleight,"—of what kind, or by whose prudence, is not known; and such was the increase of his reputation, that the Scottish "nation applied again that he would be their friend."

He was become so formidable to the Whigs, that his familiarity with the ministers was clamoured at in parliament, particularly by two men afterwards of great note, Aislabie and Walpole.

But, by the disunion of his great friends, his importance and designs were now at an end; and seeing his services at last useless, he retired, about June 1714, into Berkshire, where, in the house of a friend, he wrote what was then suppressed, but has since appeared under the title of *Free Thoughts on the present State of Affairs*.

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to pass, the death of the queen broke down at once the whole system of Tory politics; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant Whiggism, and shelter himself in unenvied obscurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by Lord Orrery

and Dr. Delany, are so different, that the credit of the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be saved, but by supposing, what I think is true, that they speak of different times. When Delany says that he was received with respect, he means for the first fortnight, when he came to take legal possession; and when Lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be understood of the time when, after the queen's death, he became a settled resident.

The Archbishop of Dublin gave him at first some disturbance in the exercise of his jurisdiction: but it was soon discovered that, between prudence and integrity, he was seldom in the wrong; and that when he was right, his spirit did not easily yield to opposition.

Having so lately quitted the tumults of a party and the intrigues of a court, they still kept his thoughts in agitation, as the sea fluctuates a while when the storm has ceased. He therefore filled his hours with some historical attempts, relating to the *Change of the Ministers*, and the *Conduct of the Ministry*. He likewise is said to have written a *History of the four last Years of Queen Anne*; which he began in her lifetime, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never published. It was, after his death, in the hands of Lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was published, with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas; of which I can only say, that it seemed by no means to correspond with the notions that I had formed of it, from a conversation which I once heard between the Earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much against his will, commenced Irishman for life; and was to contrive how he might be best accommodated in a country where he considered himself as in a state of exile. It seems that his first recourse was to piety. The thoughts of death rushed upon him at this time with such incessant importunity, that they took possession of his mind, when he first waked, for many years together.

He opened his house by a public table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more visitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnson had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his public days she regulated the table, but appeared at it as a mere guest, like other ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a stated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral, whose house was recommended by the peculiar neatness and pleasantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living he was first disposed by care to pay some debts which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleasure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not suffered to obstruct the claims of his dignity: he was served in plate; and used to say that he was the poorest gentleman in Ireland that ate upon plate, and the richest that lived without a coach.

How he spent the rest of his time, and how he employed his hours of study, has been inquired with hopeless curiosity. For who can give an account of another's studies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his business or his leisure.

Soon after (1716), in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnson, by Dr. Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told

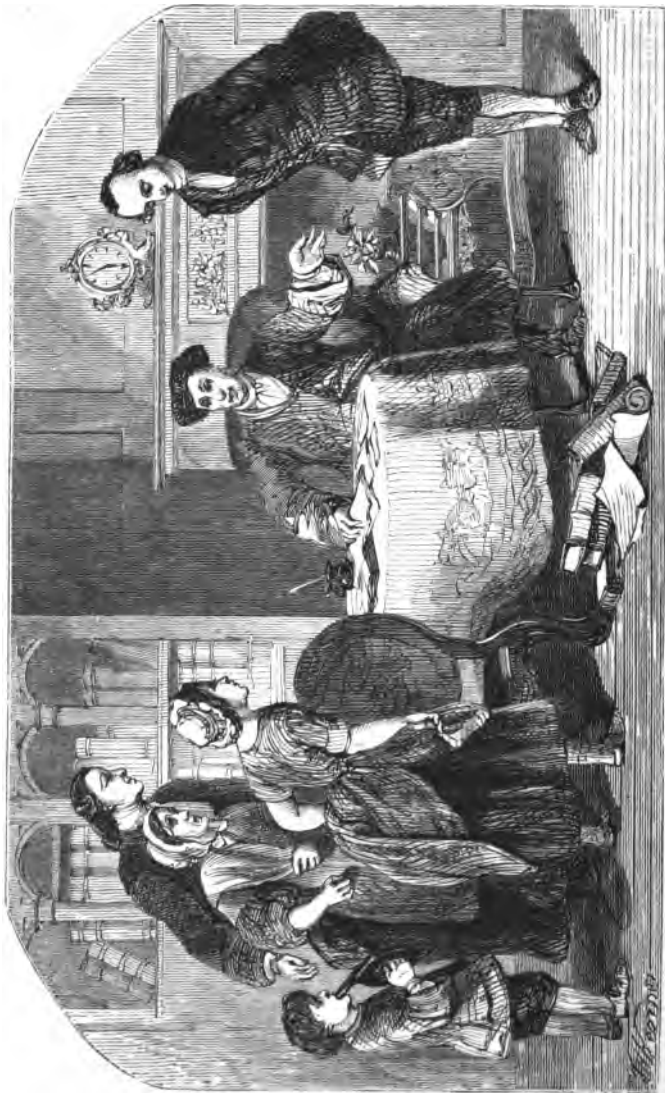
me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life: they lived in different houses, as before; nor did she ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was seized with a fit of giddiness. "It would be difficult," says Lord Orrery, "to prove that they were ever afterwards together without a third person."

The Dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends; till, about the year 1720, he, by a pamphlet, recommended to the Irish the use, and consequently the improvement, of their manufacture. For a man to use the productions of his own labour, is surely a natural right; and to like best what he makes himself, is a natural passion. But to excite this passion, and enforce this right, appeared so criminal to those who had an interest in the English trade, that the printer was imprisoned; and, as Hawkesworth justly observes, the attention of the public being by this outrageous resentment turned upon the proposal, the author was by consequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiously distinguished by the name of Vanessa, whose conduct has been already sufficiently discussed, and whose history is too well known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom Decanus (the Dean), called Cadenus by transposition of the letters, took pleasure in directing and instructing; till, from being proud of his praise, she grew fond of his person. Swift was then about forty-seven, at an age when vanity is strongly excited by the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be said that Swift should have checked a passion which he never meant to gratify, recourse must be had to that extenuation which he so much despised, "men are but men:" perhaps, however, he did not at first know his own mind, and, as he represents himself, was undetermined. For his admission of her courtship, and his indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella, no other honest plea can be found, than that he delayed a disagreeable discovery from time to time, dreading the immediate bursts of distress, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herself neglected, and died of disappointment; having ordered by her will the poem to be published, in which Cadenus had proclaimed her excellence and confessed his love. The effect of the publication upon the Dean and Stella is thus related by Delany:

"I have good reason to believe that they both were greatly shocked and distressed (though it may be differently) upon this occasion. The Dean made a tour to the south of Ireland, for about two months, at this time, to dissipate his thoughts, and give place to obloquy. And Stella retired (upon the earnest invitation of the owner) to the house of a cheerful, generous, good-natured friend of the Dean's, whom she always much loved and honoured. There my informer often saw her; and, I have reason to believe, used his utmost endeavours to relieve, support, and amuse her in this sad situation.

"One little incident he told me of on that occasion I think I shall never forget. As her friend was an hospitable, open-hearted man, well beloved and largely acquainted, it happened one day that some gentlemen dropped in to dinner, who were strangers to Stella's



SWIFT AND HIS BUTLER.

situation; and as the poem of *Cadenus and Vanessa* was then the general topic of conversation, one of them said, 'Surely that Vanessa must be an extraordinary woman, that could inspire the Dean to write so finely upon her.' Mrs. Johnson smiled, and answered, 'that she thought that point not quite so clear; for it was well known the Dean could write finely upon a broomstick.'"

The great acquisition of esteem and influence was made by the *Drapier's Letters* in 1724. One Wood, of Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, a man enterprising and rapacious, had, as is said, by a present to the Duchess of Munster, obtained a patent empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of halfpence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarrassing scarcity of copper coin: so that it was possible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money; for the cook or keeper of an alehouse could not refuse to supply a man that had silver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plausible. The scarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old halfpence; and was about to turn his brass into gold, by pouring the treasures of his new mint upon Ireland, when Swift, finding that the metal was debased to an enormous degree, wrote letters, under the name of "M. B. Drapier," to show the folly of receiving, and the mischief that must ensue by giving, gold and silver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was universally refused: but the governors of Ireland considered resistance to the king's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitshed, then chief justice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and sent out the jury nine times, till by clamour and menaces they were frightened into a special verdict, now presented the "Drapier," but could not prevail on the grand jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the privy council published a proclamation offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the fourth letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printers, and trusted only his butler, who transcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, strolled from the house, and stayed out all night and part of the next day. There was reason enough to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery and leave the house: "for," says he, "I know that my life is in your power; and I will not bear, out of fear, either your insolence or negligence." The man excused his fault with great submission, and begged that he might be confined in the house while it was in his power to endanger his master; but the Dean resolutely turned him out, without taking further notice of him, till the term of the information had expired, and then received him again. Soon afterwards, he ordered him and the rest of the servants into his presence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-servant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blakeney, verger of St. Patrick's, an

officer whose income was between thirty and forty pounds a year ; yet he still continued for some years to serve his old master as his butler.

Swift was known from this time by the appellation of "the Dean." He was honoured by the populace as the champion, patron, and instructor of Ireland ; and gained such power as, considered both in its extent and duration, scarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher station.

He was from this important year the oracle of the traders and the idol of the rabble ; and, by consequence, was feared and courted by all to whom the kindness of the traders or the populace was necessary. The "Drapier" was a sign ; the "Drapier" was a health ; and which way soever the eye or the ear was turned, some tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the "Drapier."

The benefit was indeed great : he had rescued Ireland from a very oppressive and predatory invasion ; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occasion where the public interest was supposed to be involved. Nor did he much scruple to boast his influence ; for when, upon some attempts to regulate the coin, Archbishop Boulter, then one of the justices, accused him of exasperating the people, he exculpated himself by saying, "If I had lifted up my finger, they would have torn you to pieces."

But the pleasure of popularity was soon interrupted by domestic misery. Mrs. Johnson, whose conversation was to him the great softener of the ills of life, began in the year of the "Drapier's" triumph to decline ; and two years afterwards was so wasted with sickness, that her recovery was considered as hopeless.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to pass the winter with him in France ; but this call of calamity hastened him to Ireland, where perhaps his presence contributed to restore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now so much at ease, that (1727) he returned to England ; where he collected three volumes of *Miscellanies* in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical preface.

This important year sent likewise into the world *Gulliver's Travels* ; a production so new and strange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with such avidity, that the price of the first edition was raised before the second could be made ; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate. Criticism was for a while lost in wonder ; no rules of judgment were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made, the part which gave the least pleasure was that which describes the flying island, and that which gave most disgust must be the history of the Houyhnhnms.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the king's death arrived ; and he kissed the hands of the new king and queen three days after their accession.

By the queen, when she was princess, he had been treated with some distinction, and was well received by her in her exaltation ; but whether she gave hopes which she never took care to satisfy, or he

formed expectations which she never meant to raise, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promise of some medals which she engaged to send him.

I know not whether she had not, in her turn, some reason for complaint. A letter was sent her, not so much entreating as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Irishwoman, who was then begging subscriptions for her poems. To this letter was subscribed the name of Swift, and it has all the appearances of his diction and sentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had some little improprieties. When he was charged with this letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accusation, but never denied it: he shuffles between cowardice and veracity, and talks big when he says nothing.*

He seems desirous enough of recommencing courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindness of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Masham had performed in former times; but his flatteries were, like those of other wits, unsuccessful: the lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was seized not long afterwards by a fit of giddiness, and again heard of the sickness and danger of Mrs. Johnson. He then left the house of Pope, as it seems, with very little ceremony, finding "that two sick friends cannot live together;" and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester.

He returned to a home of sorrow: poor Stella was sinking into the grave; and, after a languishing decay of about two months, died in her forty-fourth year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life, his papers show; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved most, aggravated by the consciousness that himself had hastened it.

Beauty and the power of pleasing, the greatest external advantages that woman can desire or possess, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom she had the misfortune to love was, as Delany observes, fond of singularity, and desirous to make a mode of happiness for himself, different from the general course of things and order of Providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland, he seems resolved to keep her in his power; and therefore hindered a match sufficiently advantageous, by accumulating unreasonable demands, and prescribing conditions that could not be performed. While she was at her own disposal, he did not consider his possession as secure; resentment, ambition, or caprice might separate them; he was therefore resolved to make "assurance doubly sure," and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectation of all the pleasures of perfect friendship, without the uneasiness of conjugal restraint. But with this state poor Stella was not satisfied; she never was treated as a wife, and to the world she had the appearance of a mistress. She lived sullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and deprivation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that "it was too late."

* It is but justice to the Dean's memory, to refer to Mr. Sheridan's defence of him from this charge.

She then gave up herself to sorrowful resentment, and died under the tyranny of him by whom she was in the highest degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this eccentric tenderness, by which the laws of nature were violated to retain her, curiosity will inquire; but how shall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his testimony may be suspected. Delany and the Irish saw with Swift's eyes, and therefore add little confirmation. That she was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant in a very high degree, such admiration from such a lover makes it very probable; but she had not much literature, for she could not spell her own language; and of her wit, so loudly vaunted, the smart sayings which Swift himself has collected afford no splendid specimens.

The reader of Swift's *Letter to a Lady on her Marriage* may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for if his general thoughts on women were such as he exhibits, a very little sense in a lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would astonish him. Stella's supremacy, therefore, was perhaps, only local; she was great, because her associates were little.

In some remarks lately published on the life of Swift, his marriage is mentioned as fabulous or doubtful; but alas, poor Stella, as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy story to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany mentions it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a sigh. The rest of his life was spent in Ireland, in a country to which not even power almost despotic, nor flattery almost idolatrous, could reconcile him. He sometimes wished to visit England, but always found some reason of delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to see him; "but if not," says he, "we must part, as all human beings have parted."

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his severity exasperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deserted. But he continued his attention to the public, and wrote from time to time such directions, admonitions, or censures, as the exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In a short poem on the Presbyterians, whom he always regarded with detestation, he bestowed one stricture upon Bettesworth, a lawyer eminent for his insolence to the clergy, which, from very considerable reputation, brought him into immediate and universal contempt. Bettesworth, enraged at his disgrace and loss, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem? "Mr. Bettesworth," answered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me that if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author; and therefore I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines."

Bettesworth was so little satisfied with this account, that he publicly professed his resolution of a violent and corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's district embodied themselves in the

Dean's defence. Bettesworth declared in parliament that Swift had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Swift was popular awhile by another mode of beneficence. He set aside some hundreds to be lent in small sums to the poor, from five shillings, I think, to five pounds. He took no interest, and only required that, at repayment, a small fee should be given to the accountant; but he required that the day of promised payment should be exactly kept. A severe and punctilious temper is ill qualified for transactions with the poor; the day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been easily foreseen; but for this Swift had made no provision of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be sued. A severe creditor has no popular character; what then was likely to be said of him who employs the catchpoll under the appearance of charity? The clamour against him was loud, and the resentment of the populace outrageous; he was therefore forced to drop his scheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor.*

His asperity continually increasing, condemned him to solitude; and his resentment of solitude sharpened his asperity. He was not, however, totally deserted; some men of learning, and some women of elegance, often visited him; and he wrote from time to time either verse or prose: of his verses he willingly gave copies, and is supposed to have felt no discontent when he saw them printed. His favourite maxim was, "Vive la bagatelle!" he thought trifles a necessary part of life, and perhaps found them necessary to himself. It seemed impossible to him to be idle, and his disorders made it difficult or dangerous to be long seriously studious, or laboriously diligent. The love of ease is always gaining upon age, and he had one temptation to petty amusements peculiar to himself: whatever he did he was sure to hear applauded; and such was his predominance over all that approached, that all their applauses were probably sincere. He that is much flattered soon learns to flatter himself: we are commonly taught our duty by fear or shame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praises?

As his years increased, his fits of giddiness and deafness grew more frequent, and his deafness made conversation difficult; they grew likewise more severe, till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called *The Legion Club*, he was seized with a fit so painful, and so long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therefore no liberal entertainer; but was less frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either sex came to him in expectation of a dinner, his custom was to give every one a shilling, that they might please themselves with their provision. At last his avarice grew too powerful for his kindness; he would refuse a bottle of wine; and in Ireland no man visits where he cannot drink.

Having thus excluded conversation, and desisted from study, he had neither business nor amusement; for having by some ridiculous

* This account is contradicted by Mr. Sheridan, who with great warmth asserts, from his own knowledge, that there was not one syllable of truth in this whole account from the beginning to the end.

resolution, or mad vow, determined never to wear spectacles, he could make little use of books in his later years : his ideas, therefore, being neither renovated by discourse, nor increased by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at last his anger was heightened into madness.

He, however, permitted one book to be published, which had been the production of former years, *Polite Conversation*, which appeared in 1738. The *Directions for Servants* was printed soon after his death. These two performances show a mind incessantly attentive, and, when it was not employed upon great things, busy with minute occurrences. It is apparent that he must have had the habit of noting whatever he observed ; for such a number of particulars could never have been assembled by the power of recollection.



SWIFT'S HOUSE AT LARACOR.

He grew more violent, and his mental powers declined, till (1741) it was found necessary that legal guardians should be appointed of his person and fortune. He now lost distinction. His madness was compounded of rage and fatuity. The last face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway ; and her he ceased to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls ; but he would never touch it while the servant stayed, and at last, after it had stood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking ; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which swelled it to the size of an egg, with boils in other parts ; he was

kept long waking with the pain, and was not easily restrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at last subsided; and a short interval of reason ensuing, in which he knew his physician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery; but in a few days he sunk into a lethargic stupidity, motionless, heedless, and speechless. But it is said, that, after a year of total silence, when his housekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birthday, he answered, "It is all folly; they had better let it alone."

It is remembered, that he afterwards spoke now and then, or gave some intimation of a meaning; but at last sunk into perfect silence, which continued till about the end of October 1744, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he expired without a struggle.*

When Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the Whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the English nation. In the succeeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression; and showed that wit, confederated with truth, had such force as authority was unable to resist. He said truly of himself, that Ireland "was his debtor." It was from the time when he first began to patronise the Irish, that they may date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they revered him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works he has given very different specimens both of sentiments and expression. His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.

In his other works is found an equitable tenour of easy language,

* By his will, which is dated in May 1740, just before he ceased to be a reasonable being, he left about 1200*l.* in legacies; and the rest of his fortune, which amounted to about 11,000*l.*, to erect and endow an hospital for idiots and lunatics. He was buried in the great aisle of St. Patrick's Cathedral, under a stone of black marble, inscribed with the following Latin epitaph; it was written by himself, and shows a most unhappy misanthropic state of mind.

"Hic depositum est corpus
Jonathan Swift, S. T. P.
Hujus ecclesiæ cathedralis decani.
Ubi sævæ indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit.
Abi, viator, et imitare,
Si poteris,
Strenuum pro virili libertatis vindicatorem.
Obiit, &c."

which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any embarrassment in the complication of his clauses, any inconsequence in his connections, or abruptness in his transitions.

His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilised by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration; he always understands himself, and his reader always understands him; the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction.

This easy and safe conveyance of meaning, it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained he deserves praise. For purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode; but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade.

By his political education he was associated with the Whigs; but he deserted them when they deserted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme: he continued throughout his life to retain the disposition which he assigns to the "Church-of-England man," of thinking commonly with the Whigs of the State, and with the Tories of the Church.

He was a churchman rationally zealous; he desired the prosperity, and maintained the honour, of the clergy; of the Dissenters he did not wish to infringe the toleration, but he opposed their encroachments.

To his duty as dean he was very attentive. He managed the revenues of his church with exact economy; and it is said by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs, than had ever been in the same time since its first erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor understood music, took care that all the singers were well qualified, admitting none without the testimony of skilful judges.

In his church he restored the practice of weekly communion, and distributed the sacramental elements in the most solemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He read the service "rather with a strong, nervous voice, than in a graceful manner; his voice was sharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious."

He entered upon the clerical state with hope to excel in preach-

ing ; but complained, that, from the time of his political controversies, "he could only preach pamphlets." This censure of himself, if judgment be made from those sermons which have been printed, was unreasonably severe.

The suspicions of his irreligion proceeded in a great measure from his dread of hypocrisy ; instead of wishing to seem better, he delighted in seeming worse than he was. He went in London to early prayers, lest he should be seen at church ; he read prayers to his servants every morning with such dexterous secrecy, that Dr. Delany was six months in his house before he knew it. He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the suspicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himself had formerly asserted, that hypocrisy is less mischievous than open impiety. Dr. Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has justly condemned this part of his character.

The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.

To his domestics he was naturally rough ; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works discover, must have been a master that few could bear. That he was disposed to do his servants good, on important occasions, is no great mitigation ; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannic peevishness is perpetual. He did not spare the servants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he said of one that waited in the room, "That man has, since we sat to the table, committed fifteen faults." What the faults were, Lord Orrery, from whom I heard the story, had not been attentive enough to discover. My number may, perhaps, not be exact.

In his economy he practised a peculiar and offensive parsimony, without disguise or apology. The practice of saving being once necessary, became habitual, and grew first ridiculous, and at last detestable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleasure, was never suffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle ; and if the purpose to which he destined his little accumulations be remembered, with his distribution of occasional charity, it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expense better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his successors, but left both Laracor and the deanery more valuable than he found them. With all this talk of his covetousness and generosity, it should be remembered, that he was never rich. The revenue of his deanery was not much more than seven hundred a year.

His benefice was not graced with tenderness or civility ; he relieved without pity, and assisted without kindness ; so that those who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He made a rule to himself to give but one piece at a time, and therefore always stored his pocket with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he seemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himself, without sufficiently considering, that singularity, as it im-

plies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which justly provokes the hostility of ridicule; he, therefore, who indulges peculiar habits, is worse than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a story told by Pope* may afford a specimen.

"Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, that is mistaken by strangers for ill nature. 'Tis so odd, that there's no describing it but by facts. I'll tell you one that first comes into my head. One evening, Gay and I went to see him: you know how intimately we were all acquainted. On our coming in, 'Heyday, gentlemen (says the Doctor), what's the meaning of this visit? How came you to leave the great lords that you are so fond of, to come hither to see a poor dean?'—'Because we would rather see you than any of them.'—'Ay, any one that did not know so well as I do might believe you. But since you are come, I must get some supper for you, I suppose.'—'No, Doctor, we have supped already.'—'Supped already? that's impossible! why, 'tis not eight o'clock yet.—That's very strange; but if you had not supped, I must have got something for you.—Let me see, what should I have had? A couple of lobsters; ay, that would have done very well; two shillings—tarts, a shilling; but you will drink a glass of wine with me, though you supped so much before your usual time only to spare my pocket?'—'No, we had rather talk with you than drink with you.'—'But if you had supped with me, as in all reason you ought to have done, you must then have drank with me.—A bottle of wine, two shillings—two and two is four, and one is five: just two and sixpence a-piece. There, Pope, there's half-a-crown for you, and there's another for you, Sir; for I won't save any thing by you, I am determined.'—This was all said and done with his usual seriousness on such occasions; and, in spite of every thing we could say to the contrary, he actually obliged us to take the money."

In the intercourse of familiar life, he indulged his disposition to petulance and sarcasm, and thought himself injured if the licentiousness of his raillery, the freedom of his censures, or the petulance of his frolics, was resented or repressed. He predominated over his companions with very high ascendancy, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the style of his friend Delany, "to venture to speak to him." This customary superiority soon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift, with all his penetration, allowed himself to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occasions, he habitually affects a style of arrogance, and dictates rather than persuades. This authoritative and magisterial language he expected to be received as his peculiar mode of jocularly; but he apparently flattered his own arrogance by an assumed imperiousness, in which he was ironical only to the resentful, and to the submissive sufficiently serious.

He told stories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew himself to do well; he was therefore captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, and told the same tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to give room by a pause for

* Spence.

any other speaker. Of time, on all occasions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be justly supposed that there was in his conversation, what appears so frequently in his letters, an affectation of familiarity with the great, and ambition of momentary equality sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul. But a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity puts himself in his power: he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking, if his letters can be supposed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant; he scarcely speaks of himself but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with insolent superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the letters that pass between him and Pope, it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had ingrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind; that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They show the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.

When the queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret for a time the interception of his views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay scenes, important employment, and splendid friendships; but when time had enabled reason to prevail over vexation, the complaints, which at first were natural, became ridiculous because they were useless. But querulousness was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceased to feel. His reiterated wailings persuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an English parish; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected; and Swift still retained the pleasure of complaining.

The greatest difficulty that occurs, in analysing his character, is to discover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almost every other mind shrinks with disgust. The ideas of pleasure, even when criminal, may solicit the imagination; but what has disease, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with this gross corruption before his long visit to Pope. He does not consider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an ascendent mind. But the truth is, that Gulliver had described his Yahoos before the visit; and he that had formed those images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himself to my perception; but now let another be heard who knew him better. Dr. Delany, after long acquaintance, describes him to Lord Orrery in these terms:

"My lord, when you consider Swift's singular, peculiar, and most variegated vein of wit, always intended rightly, although not always so rightly directed; delightful in many instances, and salutary even where it is most offensive; when you consider his strict truth, his fortitude in resisting oppression and arbitrary power; his fidelity in friendship; his sincere love and zeal for religion; his uprightness in making right resolutions, and his steadiness in adhering to them; his care of his church, its choir, its economy, and its income; his attention to all those that preached in his cathedral, in order to their amendment in pronunciation and style; as also his remarkable attention to the interest of his successors, preferably to his own present emoluments; his invincible patriotism, even to a country which he did not love; his very various, well-devised, well-judged, and extensive charities throughout his life; and his whole fortune (to say nothing of his wife's) conveyed to the same Christian purposes at his death; charities, from which he could enjoy no honour, advantage, or satisfaction of any kind in this world: when you consider his ironical and humorous, as well as his serious schemes, for the promotion of true religion and virtue; his success in soliciting for the first-fruits and twentieths, to the unspeakable benefit of the established church of Ireland; and his felicity (to rate it no higher) in giving occasion to the building of fifty new churches in London:

"All this considered, the character of his life will appear like that of his writings; they will both bear to be re-considered and re-examined with the utmost attention, and always discover new beauties and excellences upon every examination.

"They will bear to be considered as the sun, in which the brightness will hide the blemishes; and whenever petulant ignorance, pride, malice, malignity, or envy interposes to cloud or sully his fame, I take upon me to pronounce that the eclipse will not last long.

"To conclude,—No man ever deserved better of any country than Swift did of his; a steady, persevering, inflexible friend; a wise, a watchful, and a faithful counsellor, under many severe trials and bitter persecutions, to the manifest hazard both of his liberty and fortune.

"He lived a blessing, he died a benefactor, and his name will ever live an honour to Ireland."

In the poetical works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critic can exercise his powers. They are often humorous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they consist of "proper words in proper places."

To divide this collection into classes, and show how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgment, but his humour.

It was said, in a preface to one of the Irish editions, that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that, in all his excellences and all his defects, has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.

EDMUND SMITH.*

(1668-1710.)

Edmund Smith is one of those lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praise but what can be given to intellectual excellence, seldom employed to any virtuous purpose. His character, as given by Mr. Oldisworth with all the partiality of friendship, which is said by Dr. Burton to show "what fine things one man of parts can say of another," and which, however, comprises great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to transcribe at once than to take by pieces. I shall subjoin such little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. Edmund Smith (born 1668) was the only son of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous Baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of his father, which were soon followed by his death, were the occasion of the son's being left very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's sister), whose name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Westminster school under the care of Dr. Busby; whence, after the loss of his faithful and generous guardian (whose name he assumed and retained), he was removed to Christchurch in Oxford, and there by his aunt handsomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious society till within five years of his own; though, some time before his leaving Christchurch, he was sent for by his mother to Worcester, and owned and acknowledged as her legitimate son; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aspersions that were ignorantly cast by some on his birth. It is to be remembered, for our author's honour, that, when at Westminster election he stood a candidate for one of the Universities, he so signally distinguished himself by his conspicuous performances, that there arose no small contention between the representative electors of Trinity College in Cambridge and Christchurch in Oxon, which of those two royal societies should adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity College having the preference of choice that year, they resolutely elected him; who yet,

* Johnson.

being invited at the same time to Christchurch, chose to accept of a studentship there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, seem to have been formed upon Horace's plan, who says, in his *Art of Poetry* :

" Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium ; alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice."

He was endowed by nature with all those excellent and necessary qualifications which are previous to the accomplishment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet, by a curious felicity, chiefly susceptible of the finest impressions it received from the best authors he read, which it always preserved in their primitive strength and amiable order.

He had a quickness of apprehension, and vivacity of understanding, which easily took in and surmounted the most subtle and knotty parts of mathematics and metaphysics. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet solid and piercing ; his taste delicate, his head clear, and his way of expressing his thoughts perspicuous and engaging. I shall say nothing of his person, which yet was so well turned, that no neglect of himself in his dress could render it disagreeable ; insomuch that the fair sex, who observed and esteemed him, at once commended and reprov'd him by the name of the handsome sloven. An eager, but generous and noble emulation grew up with him ; which (as it were a rational sort of instinct) pushed him upon striving to excel in every art and science that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the most learned and polite University ; and it was his happiness to have several contemporaries and fellow-students who exercised and excited this virtue in themselves and others, thereby becoming so deservedly in favour with this age, and so good a proof its nice discernment. His judgment, naturally good, soon ripened into an exquisite fineness and distinguishing sagacity, which as it was active and busy, so it was vigorous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and strong imagination, always upon the wing, and never tired with aspiring. Hence it was that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities ; and his earliest productions were so far from having any thing in them mean and trifling, that, like the junior compositions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors blush. There are many of his first essays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epic, still handed about the University in manuscript, which show a masterly hand ; and, though maimed and injured by frequent transcribing, make their way into our most celebrated miscellanies, where they shine with uncommon lustre. Besides those verses in the Oxford books which he could not help setting his name to, several of his compositions came abroad under other names, which his own singular modesty and faithful silence strove in vain to conceal. The *Encœnia* and public collections of the University upon state subjects were never in such esteem, either for elegy and congratulation, as when he contributed most largely to them ; and it was natural for those who knew his peculiar way of writing to turn to his share in the work, as by far the most relishing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary,

so he well knew how to improve them; and not only to polish the diamond, but enchase it in the most solid and durable manner. Though he was an academic the greatest part of his life, yet he contracted no sourness of temper, no spice of pedantry, no itch of disputation, or obstinate contention for the old or new philosophy, no assuming way of dictating to others, which are faults (though excusable) which some are insensibly led into who are constrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His conversation was pleasant and instructive; and what Horace said of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might justly be applied to him:

"Nil ego contulerim jucundo fannus amico."

Sat. v. l. 1.

As correct a writer as he was in his most elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candour, and reserved his greatest severity for his own compositions; being readier to cherish and advance, than damp or depress, a rising genius; and as patient of being excelled himself (if any could excel him) as industrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wished he had confined himself to a particular profession, who was capable of surpassing in any; but, in this, his want of application was in a great measure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He passed through the exercises of the college and University with unusual applause; and though he often suffered his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out those jovial avocations, yet his return to his studies were so much the more passionate, and his intention upon those refined pleasures of reading and thinking so vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion), that the habit grew upon him, and the series of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better sort his ideas, and take in the sundry parts of a science at one view, without interruption or confusion. Some, indeed, of his acquaintance, who were pleased to distinguish between the wit and the scholar, extolled him altogether on account of these titles; but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him justice as a prodigy in both kinds. He had signalised himself, in the schools, as a philosopher and polemic of extensive knowledge and deep penetration; and went through all the courses with a wise regard to the dignity and importance of each science. I remember him in the divinity-school responding and disputing with a perspicuous energy, a ready exactness, and commanding force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily presided in the chair; whose condescending and disinterested commendation of him gave him such a reputation as silenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durst not contradict the approbation of so profound a master in theology. None of those self-sufficient creatures, who have either trifled with philosophy, by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms and burdensome explanations, understood its real weight and purity half so well as Mr. Smith. He was too discerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abstruse, which some superficial sciolists (so very smooth and polite as to admit of no impression), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded

prejudice, had affixed to this sort of studies. He knew the thorny terms of philosophy served well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion; and looked upon school-divinity as upon a rough but well-wrought army, which might at once adorn and defend the Christian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin classics; with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth perusing in the French, Spanish, and Italian (to which languages he was no stranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his own country. But then, according to the curious observation of the late Earl of Shaftesbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticism; and, as it were, married the two arts for their mutual support and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that subject, which he had not diligently examined, from Aristotle down to Hederlin and Bossu; so that, having each rule constantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he seemed to read with a design to correct as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taste every little delicacy that was set before him; though it was impossible for him at the same time to be fed and nourished with any thing but what was substantial and lasting. He considered the ancients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the same plan,—the art of poetry; according to which he judged, approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the compositions of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper), but strict justice would not let him call a few flowers set in ranks, a glib measure, and so many couplets, by the name of poetry: he was of Ben Jonson's opinion, who could not admire

“Verses as smooth and soft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor stream.”

And therefore, though his want of complaisance for some men's overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, has shown the world how great a master he was of the Ciceronian eloquence, mixed with the conciseness and force of Demosthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wise reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roscommon, no man understood Horace better, especially as to his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the soft and the sublime. This endeared Dr. Hanne's odes to him, the finest genius for Latin lyric since the Augustan age. His friend Mr. Philips's ode to Mr. St. John (late Lord Bolingbroke), after the manner of Horace's lusus or amatorian odes, is certainly a masterpiece; but Mr. Smith's *Pocockius* is of the sublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the most delicate and surprising turns peculiar to the person praised. I do not remember to have seen any thing like it in

Dr. Bathurst,* who had made some attempts this way with applause. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and so good an historian, that in familiar discourse he would talk over the most memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters, of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digested Thuanus's works, so he was able to copy after him; and his talent in this kind was so well known and allowed, that he had been singled out by some great men to write a history; which it was for their interest to have done with the utmost art and dexterity. I shall not mention for what reasons this design was dropped, though they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I speak it before living witnesses, whilst an agreeable company could fix him upon a subject of useful literature, nobody shone to greater advantage; he seemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius speaks of:

"Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus."

His works are not many, and those scattered up and down in miscellanies and collections, being wrested from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a small part of that much greater body which lies dispersed in the possession of numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made entire, without great injustice to him, because few of them had his last hand, and the transcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolence for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the noblest beauties, and has done justice to the ashes of that second Milton, whose writings will last as long as the English language, generosity, and valour. For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendship; a passion he was most susceptible of, and whose laws he looked upon as sacred and inviolable.

Every subject that passed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embellishments bestowed on it, which an exquisite skill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgment, possibly could bestow on it. The epic, lyric, elegiac, and every sort of poetry he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raised to its proper height, and the differences between each of them observed with a judicious accuracy. We saw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other; and there was a predominant fancy and spirit of his own infused, superior to what some draw off from the ancients, or from poesies here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful industry and servile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his sentiments charming and majestic; his expressions natural and bold; his numbers various and sounding; and that enamelled mixture of classical wit, which, without redundancy and affectation, sparkled through his writings, and were no less pertinent and agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a consummate tragedy, and the success of it was as great as the most sanguine expectations of his friends could promise or foresee. The number of nights, and the common method of

* Dr. Ralph Bathurst, whose life and literary remains were published in 1761 by Thomas Warton.

filling the house, are not always the surest marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with: but the generosity of all the persons of a refined taste about town was remarkable on this occasion; and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused his interest, with all the elegant judgment and diffusive good-nature for which that accomplished gentleman and author is so justly valued by mankind. But as to Phædra, she has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the English stage, than either in Rome or Athens; and if she excels the Greek and Latin Phædra, I need not say she surpasses the French one, though embellished with whatever regular beauties and moving softness Racine himself could give her.

No man had a juster notion of the difficulty of composing than Mr. Smith; and he sometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reason to apprehend. Writing with ease, what (as Mr. Wycherley speaks) may be easily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a subject, he would seriously consider what Demosthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace, if alive, would say upon that occasion, which whetted him to exceed himself as well as others. Nevertheless, he could not, or would not, finish several subjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briskness of his fancy, still hunting after a new matter, or to an occasional indolence, which spleen and lassitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was least inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit or vanity, or a fulness of himself (a frailty which has been imputed to no less men than Shakespeare and Jonson), is clear from hence: because he left his works to the entire disposal of his friends, whose most rigorous censures he even courted and solicited, submitting to their animadversions, and the freedom they took with them, with an unreserved and prudent resignation.

I have seen sketches and rough draughts of some poems to be designed, set out analytically; wherein the fable, structure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, episodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were so finely laid out, so well fitted to the rules of art, and squared so exactly to the precedents of the ancients, that I have often looked on these poetical elements with the same concern with which curious men are affected at the sight of the most entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Those fragments of the learned, which some men have been so proud of their pains in collecting, are useless rarities, without form and without life, when compared with these embryos, which wanted not spirit enough to preserve them; so that I cannot help thinking, that, if some of them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the sketches of Julio and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few outlines, as to the design and proportion.

It must be confessed that Mr. Smith had some defects in his conduct, which those are most apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing else. His freedom with himself drew severer acknowledgments from him than all the malice he ever produced was capable of advancing, and he did not scruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults; but if the world had half his good-nature, all the shady parts would be entirely struck out of his character.

A man who, under poverty, calamities, and disappointments, could make so many friends, and those so truly valuable, must have just and noble ideas of the passion of friendship, in the success of which consisted the greatest, if not the only happiness of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though fortune threw him short of it in every other circumstance of life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reasonable, complaints of her dispensations, under which he had honour enough to be easy, without touching the favours she flung in his way when offered to him at a price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no dealings with mankind in which he could not be just; and he desired to be at no other expense in his pretensions than that of intrinsic merit, which was the only burden and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could say, as Horace did of himself, what I never yet saw translated :

“*Meo sum pauper in ære.*”

At his coming to town, no man was more surrounded by all those who really had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men who had then a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and sciences, and gave proofs of their fondness for the name of patron in many instances, which will ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's character grew upon his friends by intimacy, and out-went the strongest prepossessions which had been conceived in his favour. Whatever quarrel a few sour creatures, whose obscurity is their happiness, may possibly have to the age; yet amidst a studied neglect, and total disuse of all those ceremonial attendances, fashionable equipments, and external recommendation, which are thought necessary introductions into the *grand monde*, this gentleman was so happy as still to please; and whilst the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable saw how much he excelled in wit and learning, they easily forgave him all other differences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were his own free choice. What Mr. Prior observes upon a very great character was true of him, “that most of his faults brought their excuse with them.”

Those who blamed him most understood him least, it being the custom of the vulgar to charge an excess upon the most complaisant, and to form a character by the morals of a few who have sometimes spoiled an hour or two in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great name, that single exception can never pass upon the best judges and most equitable observers of mankind; and when the time comes for the world to spare their pity, we may justly enlarge our demands upon them for their admiration.

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himself in several considerable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to expect mighty things from him. I have seen about ten sheets of his *English Pindar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in our own language. He had drawn out a plan of a tragedy of the *Lady Jane Grey*, and had gone through several scenes of it. But he could not well have bequeathed that work to better hands than where, I hear, it is at present lodged; and the bare mention of two such names may justify the largest expectations, and is sufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

His greatest and noblest undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finished an entire translation of the *Sublime*, which he sent to the Rev. Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critic in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French version of Monsieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far short of it. He proposed a large addition to this work, of notes and observations of his own, with an entire system of the art of poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought, Diction, and Figure*. I saw the last of these perfect, and in a fair copy, in which he showed prodigious judgment and reading; and particularly had reformed the art of rhetoric, by reducing that vast and confused heap of terms, with which a long succession of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compass, comprehending all that was useful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns, the Greek, Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian poets, and to note their several beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgment, who loved him. It cannot be supposed they would suppress any thing that was his, but out of respect to his memory, and for want of proper hands to finish what so great a genius had begun.

Such is the declamation of Oldisworth, written while his admiration was yet fresh, and his kindness warm; and therefore such as, without any criminal purpose of deceiving, shows a strong desire to make the most of all favourable truth. I cannot much commend the performance. The praise is often indistinct, and the sentences are loaded with words of more pomp than use. There is little, however, that can be contradicted, even when a plainer tale comes to be told.

Edmund Neale, known by the name of Smith, was born at Handley, the seat of the Lechmeres, in Worcestershire, in the year 1668.

He was educated at Westminster. It is known to have been the practice of Dr. Busby to detain those youth long at school of whom he had formed the highest expectations. Smith took his master's degree on the 8th of July, 1696; he therefore was probably admitted in the University in 1689, when we may suppose him twenty years old.

His reputation for literature in his college was such as has been told; but the indecency and licentiousness of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24, 1694, while he was yet only bachelor, a public admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulsion. Of this reproof the effect is not known. He was probably less notorious. At Oxford, as we all knew, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had exhibited sufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of the great orientalist, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whose praise must have been written by Smith when he had been but two years in the University.

This ode, which closed the second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps some objections may be made to its Latinity, is by

far the best lyric composition in that collection ; nor do I know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expresses, with great felicity, images not classical in classical diction ; its digressions and returns have been deservedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He had several imitations from Cowley :

“ Testatur hinc tot sermo coloribus
Quot tu, Pococki, dissimilis tui
Orator effers, quot vicissim
Te memores celebrare gaudent.”

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator pronounce the colours, or give to colours memory and delight. I quote it, however, as an imitation of these lines :

“ So many languages he had in store,
That only Fame shall speak of him in more.”

The simile by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to *Ætna* flaming through the snow, which Smith has used with great pomp, is stolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Master of Arts, July 8, 1696. Of the exercises which he performed on that occasion, I have not heard any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation ; for he continued to cultivate his mind, though he did not amend his irregularities ; by which he gave so much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the dean and chapter declared “ the place of Mr. Smith void, he having been convicted of riotous behaviour in the house of Mr. Cole, an apothecary ; but it was referred to the dean when and upon what occasion the sentence should be put in execution.”

Thus tenderly was he treated ; the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wished that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some time afterwards he assumed an appearance of decency : in his own phrase, he “ whitened ” himself, having a desire to obtain the censorship, an office of honour and some profit in the college ; but when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. Foulkes, his junior ; the same, I suppose, that joined with Freind in an edition of part of Demosthenes. The censor is a tutor ; and it was not thought proper to trust the superintendence of others to a man who took so little care of himself.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit against the dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he considered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon upon him, I once heard a single line too gross to be repeated.

But he was still a genius and a scholar, and Oxford was unwilling to lose him : he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices, two years longer ; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the instance of all the canons, the sentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, silent and tender ; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he associated himself with the Whigs; whether because they were in power, or because the Tories had expelled him, or because he was a Whig by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was, however, caressed by men of great abilities, whatever were their party; and was supported by the liberality of those who delighted in his conversation.

There was once a design, hinted at by Oldisworth, to have made him useful. One evening, as he was sitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter; and having stayed some time below, came up thoughtful. After a pause, said he to his friend, "He that wanted me below was Addison, whose business was to tell me that a history of the revolution was intended, and to propose that I should undertake it. I said, 'What shall I do with the character of Lord Sunderland?' and Addison immediately returned, 'When, Rag, were you drunk last?' and went away."

"Captain Rag" was a name which he got at Oxford by his negligence of dress.

This story I heard from the late Mr. Clarke of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such scruples might debar him from some profitable employments; but, as they could not deprive him of any real esteem, they left him many friends; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a prologue and epilogue from the first wits on either side.

But learning and nature will now and then take different courses. His play pleased the critics, and the critics only. It was, as Addison has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had, indeed, trusted entirely to his merit, had insured no band of applauders, nor used any artifice to force success, and found that native excellence was not sufficient for its own support.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to sixty; and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitless importunity, gave notice that he would publish the play without it. Now, therefore, it was written; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of 300*l.* a-year. Smith, by pride, or caprice, or indolence, or bashfulness, neglected to attend him, though doubtless warned and pressed by his friends; and at last missed his reward by not going to solicit it.

Addison has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as disgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondness for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addison is great; yet the voice of the people, when to please the people is the purpose, deserves regard. In this question, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a story which we are accustomed to reject as false; and the manners are so distant from our own, that we know them not from sympathy, but by study; the ignorant do not understand the action; the learned reject it as a school-boy's tale, *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with interest or anxiety. The sentiments, thus remote from life, are removed yet further by the

diction, which is too luxuriant and splendid for dialogue, and envelops the thoughts rather than displays them. It is a scholar's play, such as may please the reader rather than the spectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accustomed to please itself with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the course of life.

Dennis tells us, in one of his pieces, that he had once a design to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced that the action was too mythological.

In 1709, a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occasion, wrote a poem, which justice must place among the best elegies which our language can show; an elegant mixture of fondness and admiration, of dignity and softness. There are some passages too ludicrous; but every human performance has its faults.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchase for a guinea; and as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldisworth, I have never otherwise heard. His *Longinus* he intended to accompany with some illustrations, and had selected his instances of the false sublime from the works of Blackmore.

He resolved to try again the fortune of the stage with the story of *Lady Jane Grey*. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale might determine him to choose an action from the English history, at no great distance from our own times, which was to end in a real event, produced by the operation of known characters.

A subject will not easily occur that can give more opportunities of informing the understanding, for which Smith was unquestionably qualified, or for moving the passions, in which I suspect him to have had less power.

Having formed his plan and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his design; and, that he might pursue his work with less frequent avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Duckett to his house at Gartham, in Wiltshire. Here he found such opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his studies, and particularly some strong ale, too delicious to be resisted. He ate and drank till he found himself plethoric; and then, resolving to ease himself by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a prescription of a purge so forcible, that the apothecary thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleased with the contradiction of a shopman, and boastful of his own knowledge, treated the notice with rude contempt, and swallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Duckett communicated to Oldmixon, the historian, an account pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's history was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and insert the alterations.

This story was published triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be

supposed to have been eagerly received ; but its progress was soon checked ; for, finding its way into the *Journal of Trevoux*, it fell under the eye of Atterbury, then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, that he never in his whole life had once spoken to Smith ;* his company being, as must be inferred, not accepted by those who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton, of Eton, a man eminent for literature ; and though not of the same party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too studious of truth to leave them burdened with a false charge. The testimonies which he has collected have convinced mankind that either Smith or Duckett was guilty of wilful and malicious falsehood.

This controversy brought into view those parts of Smith's life which, with more honour to his name, might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet say a little more. He was a man of such estimation among his companions, that the casual censures or praises which he dropped in conversation were considered, like those of Scaliger, as worthy of preservation.

He had great readiness and exactness of criticism, and by a cursory glance over a new composition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he so easily collected.

He therefore always knew what the present question required ; and when his friends expressed their wonder at his acquisitions, made in a state of apparent negligence and drunkenness, he never discovered his hours of reading or method of study, but involved himself in affected silence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration.

One practice he had, which was easily observed : if any thought or image was presented to his mind that he could use or improve, he did not suffer it to be lost ; but, amidst the jollity of a tavern, or in the warmth of conversation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy ; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he says, very little use, but which the collector considered as a valuable stock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and dissolute, and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleasure ; but his dress was always deficient ; scholastic cloudiness still hung about him ; and his merriment was sure to produce the scorn of his companions.

With all his carelessness and all his vices, he was one of the murderers at fortune ; and wondered why he was suffered to be poor, when Addison was caressed and preferred ; nor would a very little have contented him ; for he estimated his wants at six hundred pounds a year.

In his course of reading, it was particular that he had diligently

* See Bishop Atterbury's *Epistolary Correspondence*, 1799, vol. iii. pp. 126, 133. In the same work, vol. i. p. 325, it appears that Smith was at one time suspected by Atterbury to have been author of the *Tale of a Tub*.

perused and accurately remembered the old romances of knight-errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and was something contemptuous in his treatment of those whom he considered as not qualified to oppose or contradict him. He had many frailties; yet it cannot but be supposed that he had great merit, who could obtain to the same play a prologue from Addison and an epilogue from Prior; and who could have at once the patronage of Halifax and the praise of Oldisworth.

For the power of communicating these minute memorials, I am indebted to my conversation with Gilbert Walmsley, late registrar of the ecclesiastical court of Lichfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Duckett; and declared, that if the tale concerning Clarendon was forged, he should suspect Duckett of the falsehood; for "Rag was a man of great veracity."

Of Gilbert Walmsley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the first friends that literature procured me; and I hope that at least my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy; yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief of revelation was unshaken; his learning preserved his principles; he grew first regular, then pious.

His studies had been so various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not immediately know, he could at least tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and such his copiousness of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now passes in which I have not some advantage from his friendship.

At this man's table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physic will be long remembered, and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure.

In the library at Oxford is the following ludicrous analysis of *Pocockius*:

EX AUTOGRAPHO.

(Sent by the Author to Mr. Urry.)

Opusculum hoc, Halberdarie amplissime, in lucem proferre hactenus distuli, iudicii tui acumen subveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando oden hanc ad te mitto sublimem, teneram, flebilem, suavem, qualem demum divinus (si Musis vacaret) scripsisset Gastrellus: adeo scilicet sublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo febilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inspicias, ver-

suum ordinem et materiam breviter referam. 1^{us} versus de duobus præliis decantatis. 2^{us} et 3^{us} de Lotharingio, cuniculis subterraneis, saxis, ponto, hostibus, et Asiâ. 4^{us} et 5^{us} de catenis, subdibus, uncis, draconibus, tigribus et crocodilis. 6^{us}, 7^{us}, 8^{us}, 9^{us}, de Gomorrhâ, de Babylone, Babele, et quodam domi suæ peregrino. 10^{us}, aliquid de quodam Pocockio. 11^{us}, 12^{us}, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13^{us}, 14^{us}, de Hoseâ, et quercu, et de juvene quodam valde sene. 15^{us}, 16^{us}, de Ætnâ, et quomodo Ætna Pocockio fit valde similis. 17^{us}, 18^{us}, de tubâ, astro, umbrâ, flammis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Christianis, Ottomanis, Babylonis, Arabibus, et gravissimâ agrorum melancholiâ; de Cæsare *Flacco*,* Nestore, et miserando juvenis cujusdam florentissimi fato, anno ætatis suæ centesimo præmaturè abrepti. Quæ omnia cum accuratè expenderis, necesse est ut oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietate constare fatearis. Subitò ad Batavos proficiscor, lauro ab illis donandus. Prius verò Pembrosienses voco ad certamen poeticum. Vale.

Illustrissima tua deosculor crura.

E. SMITH.

THOMAS YALDEN.†

(1669-1736.)

Thomas Yalden, the sixth son of Mr. John Yalden, of Sussex, was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-school belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of Josiah Pullen, a man whose name is still remembered in the University. He became next year one of the scholars of Magdalen College, where he was distinguished by a lucky accident.

It was his turn one day to pronounce a declamation; and Dr. Hough, the president, happening to attend, thought the composition too good to be the speaker's. Some time after, the doctor, finding him a little irregularly busy in the library, set him an exercise for punishment; and, that he might not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the subject given, and produced with little difficulty a composition which so pleased the president, that he told him his former suspicions, and promised to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addison and Sacheverell, men who were in those times friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued throughout his life to think as probably he thought at first, yet did not forfeit the friendship of Addison.

When Namur was taken by King William, Yalden made an ode. There never was any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of

* Pro *Flacco*, animo paulo attentiore, scripsisse *Marone*.

† Johnson.

William, who had very little regard for song himself, but happened to employ ministers who pleased themselves with the praise of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in a humorous poem of that time, called *The Oxford Laureat*; in which, after many claims had been made and rejected, Yalden is represented as demanding the laurel, and as being called to his trial, instead of receiving a reward.

“ His crime was for being a felon in verse,
And presenting his theft to the king;
The first was a trick not uncommon or scarce,
But the last was an impudent thing:
Yet what he had stolen was so little worth stealing,
They forgave him the damage and cost;
Had he ta'en the whole ode, as he took it piece-mealing,
They had fin'd him but ten-pence at most.”

The poet whom he was charged with robbing was Congreve.

He wrote another poem, on the death of the Duke of Gloucester.

In 1700 he became fellow of the college; and next year, entering into orders, was presented by the society with a living in Warwickshire*, consistent with his fellowship, and chosen lecturer of moral philosophy, a very honourable office.

On the accession of Queen Anne he wrote another poem; and is said by the author of the *Biographia* to have declared himself of the party who had the honourable distinction of high-churchmen.

In 1706 he was received into the family of the Duke of Beaufort. Next year he became doctor in divinity, and soon after resigned his fellowship and lecture; and, as a token of his gratitude, gave the college a picture of their founder.

He was made rector of Chalton and Cleanville,† two adjoining towns and benefices in Hertfordshire; and had the prebends, or sinecures, of Deans, Hains, and Pendles in Devonshire. He was not long after chosen preacher of Bridewell Hospital, upon the resignation of Dr. Atterbury, June 1713.

From this time he seems to have led a quiet and inoffensive life, till the clamour was raised about Atterbury's plot. Every loyal eye was on the watch for abettors or partakers of the horrid conspiracy; and Dr. Yalden, having some acquaintance with the bishop, and being familiarly conversant with Kelly his secretary, fell under suspicion, and was taken into custody.

Upon his examination, he was charged with a dangerous correspondence with Kelly. The correspondence he acknowledged; but maintained that it had no treasonable tendency. His papers were seized; but nothing was found that could fix a crime upon him, except two words in his pocket-book, “thorough-paced doctrine.” This expression the imagination of his examiners had impregnated with treason, and the doctor was enjoined to explain them. Thus pressed, he told them that the words had lain unheeded in his pocket-book from the time of Queen Anne, and that he was ashamed to give an account of them; but the truth was, that he had gratified his curiosity one day by hearing Daniel Burgess in the pulpit, and those

* The vicarage of Willoughby, which he resigned in 1708.

† This preferment was given him by the Duke of Beaufort.

words were a memorial hint of a remarkable sentence by which he warned his congregation to 'beware of' thorough-paced doctrine, "that doctrine which, coming in at one ear, paces through the head, and goes out at the other."

Nothing worse than this appearing in his papers, and no evidence arising against him, he was set at liberty.

It will not be supposed that a man of this character attained high dignities in the church; but he still retained the friendship, and frequented the conversation, of a very numerous and splendid set of acquaintance. He died July 16, 1736, in the 66th year of his age.

Of his poems, many are of that irregular kind which, when he formed his poetical character, was supposed to be Pindaric. Having fixed his attention on Cowley as a model, he has attempted in some sort to rival him, and has written a *Hymn to Darkness*, evidently as a counter-part to Cowley's *Hymn to Light*.

This hymn seems to be his best performance, and is for the most part imagined with great vigour, and expressed with great propriety. I will not transcribe it. The first seven stanzas are good; but the third, fourth, and seventh are the best; the eighth seems to involve a contradiction; the tenth is exquisitely beautiful; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth are partly mythological and partly religious, and therefore not suitable to each other: he might better have made the whole merely philosophical.

There are two stanzas in this poem where Yalden may be suspected, though hardly convicted, of having consulted the *Hymnus ad Ubram* of Wowerus, in the sixth stanza, which answers in some sort to these lines:

"Illa suo præest nocturnis numine sacris—
Perque vias errare novis dat spectra figuris,
Manesque excitos medios ululare per agros
Sub noctem, et questu notos complere penates."

And again, at the conclusion:

"Illa suo senium secludit corpore toto
Haud numerans jugi fugientia secula lapsu,
Ergo ubi postremum mundi compage soluta
Hanc rerum molem suprema absumpserit hora
Ipsa leves cineres nube amplectetur opaca,
Et prisco imperio rursus dominabitur UMBRA."

His *Hymn to Light* is not equal to the other. He seems to think that there is an east absolute and positive where the morning rises.

In the last stanza, having mentioned the sudden eruption of new-created light, he says,

"Awhile th' Almighty wond'ring stood."

He ought to have remembered that Infinite Knowledge can never wonder. All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.

Of his other poems, it is sufficient to say that they deserve perusal; though they are not always exactly polished, though the rhymes are sometimes very ill sorted, and though his faults seem rather the omissions of idleness than the negligences of enthusiasm.



AMBROSE PHILIPS.*

(1671-1749.)

Of the birth or early part of the life of Ambrose Philips I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge;† where he first solicited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the collection published by the University, on the death of Queen Mary.

From this time, how he was employed, or in what station he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have published his pastorals before the year 1708, because they are evidently prior to those of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addressed to the universal patron, the Duke of Dorset, a *Poetical Letter from Copenhagen*, which was published in the *Tatler*, and is by Pope, in one of his first letters, mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man "who could write very nobly."[‡]

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words, since he was reduced to translate *The Persian Tales* for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-

* Johnson.

† He took his degrees, A.B. 1696, A.M. 1700.

‡ Sir Richard Steele thus mentions it with honour: "This is as fine a piece as we ever had from any of the schools of the most learned painters. Such images as these give us a new pleasure in our sight, and fix upon our minds traces of reflection, which accompany us wherever the like objects occur."

crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean sound.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*. The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or vigour.*

In 1712 he brought upon the stage *The Distrest Mother*, almost a translation of Racine's *Andromaque*. Such a work requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play, a whole *Spectator*, none indeed of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it yet continued to be acted, another *Spectator* was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience, says Pope,† was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the most successful epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The first three nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of epilogues in general, and consequently of this, was questioned by a correspondent of *The Spectator*, whose letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered in the defence, that Prior's epilogue to *Phædra* had a little excited jealousy; and something of Prior's plan may be discovered in the performance of his rival. Of this distinguished epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate‡ "the man who calls me cousin;" and when he was asked how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, "The epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first." It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it; and that, when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the solicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his translations from Sappho had been published in *The Spectator*; he was an important and distinguished associate of clubs, witty, and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice from the public was his six pastorals, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as

* This ought to have been noticed before. It was published in 1700, when he appears to have obtained a fellowship of St. John's.

† Spence.

‡ Spence.

a pleasing amusement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The rustic poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose *Eclogues* seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was soon discovered that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for images and descriptions, satyrs and fauns, and naiads and dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety of matter, which, having a natural power to soothe the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word eclogue of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goat-herds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers, and amongst others by our Spenser.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan published his bucolics with such success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferior schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, to censure the corruptions of the church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topics of controversy.

The Italians soon transferred pastoral poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia*, in prose and verse; Tasso and Guarini wrote *Favole Boscareccie*, or sylvan dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with Thyrsis and Damon, and Thestylis and Phyllis.

Philips thinks it "somewhat strange to conceive how, in an age so addicted to the Muses, pastoral poetry never comes to be so much as thought upon." His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never from the time of Spenser wanted writers to talk occasionally of Arcadia and Strephon; and half the book in which he first tried his powers consists of dialogues on Queen Mary's death, between Tityrus and Corydon, or Mopsus and Menalcas. A series or book of pastorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not long afterwards, Pope made the first display of his powers in four pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The *Guardian* gave an account of pastoral, partly critical and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the modern is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry; and the pipe of the pastoral Muse is transmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he therefore drew a comparison of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandising himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published, however, it was (*Guard.* 40); and from that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addison's approbation, as disaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not satisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to grosser insults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chastise Pope, who appears to have been extremely exasperated; for in the first edition of his letters he calls Philips "rascal," and in the last still charges him with detaining in his hands the subscriptions for Homer delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with sufficient meanness, the gratification of him by whose prosperity he was pained.

Men sometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands, which the first breath of contradiction blasted.

When, upon the succession of the House of Hanover, every Whig expected to be happy, Philips seems to have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden shower, though he did not omit what flattery could perform. He was only made a commissioner of the lottery (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a justice of the peace.

The success of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes towards the stage; he did not, however, soon commit himself to the mercy of an audience, but contented himself with the fame already acquired till, after nine years, he produced (1722) *The Briton*, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, between Vanoc the British prince and Valens the Roman general, is confessed to be written with great dramatic skill, animated by a spirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been silent ; for he exhibited another tragedy the same year, on the story of Humphry Duke of Gloucester. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happiest undertaking was of a paper called *The Freethinker*, in conjunction with associates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made, first bishop of Bristol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and charity will be long honoured.

It may easily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious ; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read ; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal essays ; but he knew how to practise the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclesiastical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be slenderly supported, he took him to Ireland as partaker of his fortune ; and making him his secretary,* added such preferences as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish parliament.

In December 1726 he was made secretary to the lord chancellor ; and in August 1733 became judge of the prerogative court.

After the death of his patron, he continued some years in Ireland ; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtless survived most of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagonist Pope. He found, however, the Duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of 400*l.*, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity ; but his hope deceived him : he was struck with a palsy, and died† June 18, 1749, in his seventy-eighth year.

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. " Philips," said he, " was once at table, when I asked him, How came thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say ' I'm goaded on by love ? ' After which question he never spoke again."

Of *The Distrest Mother* not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no subject for criticism : his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the poems comprised in the late collection, the *Letter from Denmark* may be justly praised ; the pastorals, which by the writer of the *Guardian* were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustic Muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of

* The Archbishop's " Letters," published in 1769 (the originals of which are now in Christ Church library, Oxford), were collected by Mr. Philips.

† At his house in Hanover-street, and was buried in Audley Chapel.

life which did not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected : the supposition of such a state is allowed to pastoral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines sometimes elegant ; but he has seldom much force or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of " Namby Pamby," the poems of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the " steerer of the realm," to Miss Pulteney in the nursery. The numbers are smooth and sprightly, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet, if they had been written by Addison, they would have had admirers : little things are not valued but when they are done by those who can do greater.

In his translations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity ; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least half his book deserves to be read : perhaps he valued most himself that part which the critic would reject.

JOSEPH ADDISON.*

(1672-1719.)

Joseph Addison was born on the first of May 1672, at Milston, of which his father, Lancelot Addison, was then rector, near Amesbury, in Wiltshire ; and appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was christened the same day. After the usual domestic education, which, from the character of his father, may be reasonably supposed to have given him strong impressions of piety, he was committed to the care of Mr. Naish at Amesbury, and afterwards of Mr. Taylor at Salisbury.

Not to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature is a kind of historical fraud, by which honest fame is injuriously diminished : I would therefore trace him through the whole process of his education. In 1683, in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father, being made dean of Lichfield, naturally carried his family to his new residence, and, I believe, placed him for some time, probably not long, under Mr. Shaw, then master of the school at Lichfield, father of the late Dr. Peter Shaw. Of this interval his biographers have given no account, and I know it only from a story of a barring-out, told me when I was a boy by Andrew Corbet of Shropshire, who had heard it from Mr. Pigot his uncle.

The practice of barring-out was a savage license, practised in many schools at the end of the last century, by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, some days before the time of regular recess took possession of the school, of which they barred the doors, and bade their master defiance from the windows. It is not easy to suppose

* Johnson.

that on such occasions the master would do more than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often struggled hard to force or surprise the garrison. The master, when Pigot was a school-boy, was barred out at Lichfield; and the whole operation, as he said, was planned and conducted by Addison.

To judge better of the probability of this story, I have inquired when he was sent to the Chartreux; but as he was not one of those who enjoyed the founder's benefaction, there is no account preserved of his admission. At the school of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Salisbury or Lichfield, he pursued his juvenile studies under the care of Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele which their joint labours have so effectually recorded.

Of this memorable friendship, the greater praise must be given to Steele. It is not hard to love those from whom nothing can be feared; and Addison never considered Steele as a rival; but Steele lived, as he confesses, under an habitual subjection to the predominating genius of Addison, whom he always mentioned with reverence, and treated with obsequiousness.

Addison, who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to show it, by playing a little upon his admirer; but he was in no danger of retort: his jests were endured without resistance or resentment.

But the sneer of jocularly was not the worst. Steele, whose imprudence of generosity or vanity of profusion kept him always incurably necessitous, upon some pressing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed a hundred pounds of his friend, probably without much purpose of repayment; but Addison, who seems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great sensibility the obduracy of his creditor, but with emotions of sorrow rather than of anger.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental perusal of some Latin verses gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaster, afterwards provost of Queen's College, by whose recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a demy, a term by which that society denominates those which are elsewhere called scholars: young men who partake of the founder's benefaction, and succeed in their order to vacant fellowships.*

Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticism, and grew first eminent by his Latin compositions, which are, indeed, entitled to particular praise. He has not confined himself to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his style from the general language, such as a diligent perusal of the productions of different ages happened to supply.

His Latin compositions seem to have had much of his fondness, for he collected a second volume of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, perhaps for a convenient receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces are inserted, and where his poem on the peace has the first place. He afterwards presented the collection to Boileau, who from that time "con-

* He took the degree of M.A. Feb. 14, 1693.

ceived," says Tickell, "an opinion of the English genius for poetry." Nothing is better known of Boileau, than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin, and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon subjects on which, perhaps, he would not have ventured to have written in his own language. *The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes*, *The Barometer*, and *A Bowling-green*. When the matter is low or scanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean because nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and, by the sonorous magnificence of Roman syllables, the writer conceals penury of thought and want of novelty often from the reader, and often from himself.



ADDISON WALK, OXFORD.

In his twenty-second year, he first showed his power of English poetry by some verses addressed to Dryden; and soon afterwards published a translation of the greater part of the fourth Georgic

upon bees ; after which, says Dryden, "my latter swarm is hardly worth the hiving."

About the same time he composed the arguments prefixed to the several books of Dryden's *Virgil* ; and produced an essay on the *Georgics*, juvenile, superficial, and uninstructional, without much either of the scholar's learning or the critic's penetration.

His next paper of verses contained a character of the principal English poets, inscribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verses :* as is shown by his version of a small part of *Virgil's Georgics*, published in the *Miscellanies* ; and a Latin encomium on Queen Mary, in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*. These verses exhibit all the fondness of friendship ; but, on one side or the other, friendship was afterwards too weak for the malignity of faction.

In this poem is a very confident and discriminate character of Spenser, whose work he had then never read ;† so little, sometimes, is criticism the effect of judgment. It is necessary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Congreve to Montague, then chancellor of the exchequer. Addison was then learning the trade of a courtier, and subjoined Montague, as a poetical name, to those of Cowley and of Dryden.

By the influence of Mr. Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, with his natural modesty, he was diverted from his original design of entering into holy orders. Montague alleged the corruption of men who engaged in civil employments without liberal education ; and declared that, though he was represented as an enemy to the church, he would never do it any injury but by withholding Addison from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to King William, with a rhyming introduction addressed to Lord Somers. King William had no regard to elegance or literature ; his study was only war ; yet by a choice of ministers whose disposition was very different from his own, he procured, without intention, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addison was caressed both by Somers and Montague.

In 1697 appeared his Latin verses on the peace of Ryswick, which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith, "the best Latin poem since the *Æneid*." Praise must not be too rigorously examined ; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant.

Having yet no public employment, he obtained in 1699 a pension of three hundred pounds a year, that he might be enabled to

* A letter found among Dr. Johnson's papers, dated in January 1784, from a lady in Wiltshire, contains a discovery of some importance in literary history, viz. that by the initials H. S. prefixed to the poem, we are not to understand the famous Dr. Henry Sacheverell, whose trial is the most remarkable incident in his life. The information thus communicated is, that the verses in question were not an address to the famous Dr. Sacheverell, but to a very ingenious gentleman of the same name, who died young, supposed to be a Mankaman, for that he wrote the history of the Isle of Man ; that this person left his papers to Mr. Addison, and had formed a plan of a tragedy upon the death of Socrates. The lady says she had this information from a Mr. Stephens, who was a fellow of Merton College, a contemporary and intimate with Mr. Addison in Oxford, who died, near 50 years ago, a prebendary of Winchester.

† Spence.

travel. He stayed a year at Blois, probably to learn the French language; and then proceeded in his journey to Italy, which he surveyed with the eyes of a poet.

While he was travelling at leisure, he was far from being idle; for he not only collected his observations on the country, but found time to write his *Dialogue on Medals*, and four acts of *Cato*. Such, at least, is the relation of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials, and formed his plan.

Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the letter to Lord Halifax, which is justly considered as the most elegant, if not the most sublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it necessary to hasten home; being, as Swift informs us, distressed by indigence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling squire, because his pension was not remitted.

At his return he published his travels, with a dedication to Lord Somers. As his stay in foreign countries was short, his observations are such as might be supplied by a hasty view, and consist chiefly in comparisons of the present face of the country with the descriptions left us by the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections; though he might have spared the trouble, had he known that such collections had been made twice before by Italian authors.

The most amusing passage of his book is his account of the minute republic of San Marino. Of many parts it is not a very severe censure to say, that they might have been written at home. His elegance of language and variegation of prose and verse, however, gains upon the reader; and the book, though awhile neglected, became in time so much the favourite of the public, that before it was reprinted it rose to five times its price.

When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanness of appearance which gave testimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was therefore, for a time, at full leisure for the cultivation of his mind; and a mind so cultivated gives reason to believe that little time was lost.

But he remained not long neglected or useless. The victory at Blenheim (1704) spread triumph and confidence over the nation; and Lord Godolphin, lamenting to Lord Halifax that it had not been celebrated in a manner equal to the subject, desired him to propose it to some better poet. Halifax told him that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthless men were unprofitably enriched with public money, without any care to find or employ those whose appearance might do honour to their country. To this Godolphin replied, that such abuses should in time be rectified; and that if a man could be found capable of the task then proposed, he should not want an ample recompense. Halifax then named Addison, but required that the treasurer should apply to him in his own person. Godolphin sent the message by Mr. Boyle, afterwards Lord Carleton; and Addison, having undertaken the work, communicated it to the treasurer while it was yet advanced no further than the simile of the angel, and was immediately rewarded by succeeding Mr. Locke in the place of commissioner of appeals.

In the following year he was at Hanover with Lord Halifax; and the year after he was made under-secretary of state, first to Sir

Charles Hedges, and in a few months more to the Earl of Sunderland.

About this time the prevalent taste for Italian operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a musical drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the opera of *Rosamond*, which, when exhibited on the stage, was either hissed or neglected; but, trusting that the readers would do him more justice, he published it, with an inscription to the Duchess of Marlborough,—a woman without skill, or pretensions to skill, in poetry or literature. His dedication was therefore an instance of servile absurdity, to be exceeded only by Joshua Barnes's dedication of a Greek *Anacreon* to the duke.

His reputation had been somewhat advanced by *The Tender Husband*, a comedy which Steele dedicated to him, with a confession that he owed to him several of the most successful scenes. To this play Addison supplied a prologue.

When the Marquis of Wharton was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, Addison attended him as his secretary; and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. The office was little more than nominal, and the salary was augmented for his accommodation.

Interest and faction allow little to the operation of particular dispositions or private opinions. Two men of personal characters more opposite than those of Wharton and Addison could not easily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and shameless, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right and wrong;* whatever is contrary to this may be said of Addison; but as agents of a party they were connected, and how they adjusted their other sentiments we cannot know.

Addison must, however, not be too hastily condemned. It is not necessary to refuse benefits from a bad man, when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes; nor has the subordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of those under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the instrument of wickedness. It is reasonable to suppose that Addison counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blasting influence of the lieutenant; and that, at least, by his intervention some good was done and some mischief prevented.

When he was in office, he made a law to himself, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends: "for," said he, "I may have a hundred friends; and if my fee be two guineas, I shall, by relinquishing my right, lose two hundred guineas, and no friend gain more than two; there is, therefore, no proportion between the good imparted and the evil suffered."

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his design, began the publication of *The Tatler*: but he was not long concealed; by inserting a remark on Virgil, which Addison had given him, he discovered himself. It is indeed not easy for any man to write upon literature or common life so as not to make himself known to those with whom he familiarly converses, and who are acquainted

* Dr. Johnson appears to have blended the character of the Marquis with that of his son the Duke.

with his track of study, his favourite topic, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phrases.

If Steele desired to write in secret, he was not lucky; a single month detected him. His first *Tatler* was published April 22 (1709); and Addison's contribution appeared May 26. Tickell observes, that the *Tatler* began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtless literally true; but the work did not suffer much by his unconsciousness of its commencement, or his absence at its cessation; for he continued his assistance to December 23, and the paper stopped on January 2. He did not distinguish his pieces by any signature; and I know not whether his name was not kept secret till the papers were collected into volumes.

To the *Tatler*, in about two months, succeeded the *Spectator*; a series of essays of the same kind, but written with less levity, upon a more regular plan, and published daily. Such an undertaking showed the writers not to distrust their own copiousness of materials or facility of composition; and their performance justified their confidence. They found, however, in their progress many auxiliaries. To attempt a single paper was no terrifying labour; many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addison had enough of the zeal of party; but Steele had at that time almost nothing else. The *Spectator*, in one of the first papers, showed the political tenets of its authors; but a resolution was soon taken of courting general approbation by general topics, and subjects on which faction had produced no diversity of sentiments, such as literature, morality, and familiar life. To this practice they adhered, with few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praise of Marlborough; and when Dr. Fleetwood prefixed to some sermons a preface overflowing with whiggish opinions, that it might be read by the queen,* it was reprinted in the *Spectator*.

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily conversation, to correct those depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove those grievances which, if they produce no lasting calamities, impress hourly vexation, — was first attempted by Casa in his book of *Manners*, and Castiglione in his *Courtier*; two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now less read, are neglected only because they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their usefulness to the age in which they were written is sufficiently attested by the translations which almost all the nations of Europe were in haste to obtain.

This species of instruction was continued, and perhaps advanced, by the French; among whom, La Bruyere's *Manners of the Age*, though, as Boileau remarked, it is written without connexion, certainly deserves praise for liveliness of description and justness of observation.

Before the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, if the writers for the theatre are

* This particular number of the *Spectator*, it is said, was not published till twelve o'clock, that it might come out precisely at the hour of her majesty's breakfast, and that no time might be left for deliberating about serving it up with that meal, as usual. See the edition of the *Tatler* with notes, vol. vi. No. 271, note, p. 452, &c.

excepted, England had no masters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the savageness of neglect, or the impertinence of civility; to show when to speak, or to be silent; how to refuse, or how to comply. We had many books to teach us our more important duties, and to settle opinions in philosophy or politics; but an *arbiter degantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who should survey the track of daily conversation, and free it from thorns and prickles, which tease the passer, though they do not wound him.

For this purpose nothing is so proper as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study, but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience.

This mode of conveying cheap and easy knowledge began among us in the civil war,* when it was much the interest of either party to raise and fix the prejudices of the people. At that time appeared *Mercurius Aulicus*, *Mercurius Rusticus*, and *Mercurius Civicus*: It is said, that when any title grew popular, it was stolen by the antagonist, who by this stratagem conveyed his notions to those who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of those unhappy days left scarcely any man leisure to treasure up occasional compositions; and so much were they neglected, that a complete collection is nowhere to be found.

These Mercuries were succeeded by L'Estrange's *Observer*, and that by Lesley's *Rehearsal*, and perhaps by others; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people in this commodious manner: but controversy relating to the church or state, of which they taught many to talk, whom they could not teach to judge.

It has been suggested that the Royal Society was instituted soon after the Restoration, to divert the attention of the people from public discontent. The *Tatler* and *Spectator* had the same tendency; they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political contest they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflections: and it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolic and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect which they can never wholly lose while they continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegances of knowledge.

The *Tatler* and *Spectator* adjusted, like Casa, the unsettled practice of daily intercourse by propriety and politeness; and, like La Bruyere, exhibited the characters and manners of the age. The personages introduced in these papers were not merely ideal; they were then

* Newspapers appear to have had an earlier date than here assigned. Cleveland, in his *Character of a London Diurnat*, says, "The original sinner of this kind was Dutch; Gallo-belgicus the Protoplas, and the Modern Mercuries but Hans en kelders." Some intelligence given by *Mercurius Gallo-belgicus* is mentioned in Carew's *Survey of Cornwall*, p. 126, originally published in 1602. These vehicles of information are often mentioned in the plays of James and Charles the First.

known, and conspicuous in various stations. Of the *Tatler* this is told by Steele in his last paper; and of the *Spectator* by Budgell in the preface to *Theophrastus*, a book which Addison has recommended, and which he was suspected to have revised, if he did not write it. Of those portraits, which may be supposed to be sometimes embellished and sometimes aggravated, the originals are now partly known and partly forgotten.

But to say that they united the plans of two or three eminent writers, is to give them but a small part of their due praise: they superadded literature and criticism, and sometimes towered far above their predecessors; and taught, with great justness of argument and dignity of language, the most important duties and sublime truths.

All these topics were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention.

It is recorded by Budgell, that of the characters feigned or exhibited in the *Spectator*, the favourite of Addison was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and discriminate idea,* which he would not suffer to be violated; and therefore, when Steele had shown him innocently picking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a tavern, he drew upon himself so much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appease him by a promise of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

The reason which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para mi sola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el*, made Addison declare, with undue vehemence of expression, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

It may be doubted whether Addison ever filled up his original delineation. He describes his knight as having his imagination somewhat warped; but of this perversion he has made very little use. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct seem not so much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual pressure of some overwhelming idea, as of habitual rusticity, and that negligence which solitary grandeur naturally generates.

The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madness, which from time to time cloud reason without eclipsing it, it requires so much nicety to exhibit, that Addison seems to have been deterred from prosecuting his own design.

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently expressed, an adherent to the landed interest, is opposed Sir Andrew Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the monied interest, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more consequences were at first intended than could be produced when the resolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little seems not to have pleased Addison, who, when he dismissed him from

* The errors in this account are explained at considerable length in the preface to the *Spectator* prefixed to the edition in the *British Essayists*. The original delineation of Sir Roger undoubtedly belongs to Steele.

the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true spirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he "would not build an hospital for idle people;" but at last he buys land, settles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hospital for twelve old husbandmen,—for men with whom a merchant has little acquaintance, and whom he commonly considers with little kindness.

Of essays thus elegant, thus instructive, and thus commodiously distributed, it is natural to suppose the approbation general, and the sale numerous. I once heard it observed, that the sale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the last number to produce more than twenty pounds a week, and therefore stated at one-and-twenty pounds, or three pounds ten shillings a day: this, at a half-penny a paper, will give sixteen hundred and eighty for the daily number.*

This sale is not great: yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow less; for he declares that the *Spectator*, whom he ridicules for his endless mention of the "fair sex," had before his recess wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which *Cato* came upon the stage, was the grand climacteric of Addison's reputation. Upon the death of Cato, he had, as is said, planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for several years the first four acts finished, which were shown to such as were likely to spread their admiration. They were seen by Pope, and by Cibber, who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in the despicable cant of literary modesty, that, whatever spirit his friend had shown in the composition, he doubted whether he would have courage sufficient to expose it to the censure of a British audience.

The time, however, was now come when those who affected to think liberty in danger, affected likewise to think that a stage-play might preserve it; and Addison was importuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain, to show his courage and his zeal by finishing his design.

To resume his work he seemed perversely and unaccountably unwilling; and by a request, which perhaps he wished to be denied, desired Mr. Hughes to add a fifth act. Hughes supposed him serious, and, undertaking the supplement, brought in a few days some scenes for his examination; but he had, in the meantime, gone to work himself, and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly disproportionate to the foregoing parts, like a task performed with reluctance, and hurried to its conclusion.

It may be doubted whether *Cato* was made public by any change of the author's purpose; for Dennis charged him with raising prejudices in his own favour by false positions of preparatory criticism, and with poisoning the town by contradicting in the *Spectator* the established rule of poetical justice, because his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we must guess.

Addison was, I believe, sufficiently disposed to bar all avenues

* That this calculation is not exaggerated, that it is even much below the real number, see the notes on the *Tatler*, ed. 1786, vol. vi. p. 452.

against all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were these words: "Britons, arise! be worth like this approved!" meaning nothing more than, Britons, erect and exalt yourselves to the approbation of public virtue. Addison was frightened, lest he should be thought a promoter of insurrection, and the line was liquidated to "Britons, attend!"

Now "heavily in clouds came on the day, the great, the important day," when Addison was to stand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little hazard as was possible, on the first night Steele, as himself relates, undertook to pack an audience. This, says Pope,* had been tried for the first time in favour of *The Distressed Mother*; and was now, with more efficacy, practised for *Cato*.

The danger was soon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction. The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to show that the satire was unfelt. The story of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, says Pope, design a second present, when they can accompany it with as good a sentence.

The play, supported thus by the emulation of factious praise, was acted night after night for a longer time than, I believe, the public had allowed to any drama before; and the author, as Mrs. Porter long afterwards related, wandered, through the whole exhibition, behind the scenes with restless and unappeasable solicitude.

When it was printed, notice was given that the queen would be pleased if it was dedicated to her; "but, as he had designed that compliment elsewhere, he found himself obliged," says Tickell, "by his duty on the one hand, and his honour on the other, to send it into the world without any dedication."

Human happiness has always its abatements; the brightest sunshine of success is not without a cloud. No sooner was *Cato* offered to the reader, than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis with all the violence of angry criticism. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably by his temper more furious than Addison, for what they called liberty, and though a flatterer of the Whig ministry, could not sit quiet at a successful play, but was eager to tell friends and enemies that they had misplaced their admiration. The world was too stubborn for instruction; with the fate of the censurer of Corneille's *Cid*, his animadversions showed his anger without effect, and *Cato* continued to be praised.

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendship of Addison, by vilifying his old enemy; and could give resentment its full play, without appearing to revenge himself. He therefore published *A Narrative of the Madness of John Dennis*; a performance which left the objections to the play in their full force, and therefore discovered more desire of vexing the critic than of defending the poet.

Addison, who was no stranger to the world, probably saw the selfishness of Pope's friendship; and, resolving that he should have the consequences of his officiousness to himself, informed Dennis by Steele, that he was sorry for the insult; and that, whenever he should

* Spence.

think fit to answer his remarks, he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected.

The greatest weakness of the play is in the scenes of love, which are said by Pope to have been added to the original plan upon a subsequent review, in compliance with the popular practice of the stage. Such an authority it is hard to reject; yet the love is so intimately mingled with the whole action, that it cannot easily be thought extrinsic and adventitious; for if it were taken away, what would be left? or how were the four acts filled in the first draught?

At the publication, the wits seemed proud to pay their attendance with encomiastic verses. The best are from an unknown hand, which will perhaps lose somewhat of their praise when the author is known to be Jeffreys.

Cato had yet other honours. It was censured as a party play by a scholar of Oxford; and defended in a favourable examination by Dr. Sewel. It was translated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence; and by the Jesuits of St. Omer's into Latin, and played by their pupils. Of this version a copy was sent to Mr. Addison: it is to be wished that it could be found, for the sake of comparing their version of the soliloquy with that of Bland.

A tragedy was written on the same subject by Des Champs, a French poet, which was translated with a criticism on the English play. But the translator and the critic are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanswered, and therefore little read. Addison knew the policy of literature too well to make his enemy important by drawing the attention of the public upon a criticism which, though sometimes intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While *Cato* was upon the stage, another daily paper, called the *Guardian*, was published by Steele. To this Addison gave great assistance, whether occasionally or by previous engagement is not known.

The character of *Guardian* was too narrow and too serious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and decencies of life, but seemed not to include literary speculations, and was in some degree violated by merriment and burlesque. What had the *Guardian* of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with nests of ants, or with Strada's prolusions?

Of this paper nothing is necessary to be said, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the *Spectator*, with the same elegance and the same variety, till some unlucky sparkle from a Tory paper set Steele's politics on fire, and wit at once blazed into faction. He was soon too hot for neutral topics, and quitted the *Guardian* to write the *Englishman*.

The papers of Addison are marked in the *Spectator* by one of the letters in the name of Clio, and in the *Guardian* by a hand; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to usurp the praise of others, or, as Steele, with far greater likelihood, insinuates, that he could not without discontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not satisfy itself with the air of renown, but that with great eagerness he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of these papers were written with powers truly comic, with

nice discrimination of characters, and accurate observation of natural or accidental deviation from propriety ; but it was not supposed that he had tried a comedy on the stage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of *The Drummer*. This, however, Steele did not know to be true by any direct testimony ; for when Addison put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a "gentleman in the company ;" and when it was received, as is confessed, with cold disapprobation, he was probably less willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection ; but the testimony of Steele, and the total silence of any other claimant, has determined the public to assign it to Addison, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried *The Drummer* to the playhouse, and afterwards to the press, and sold the copy for fifty guineas.

To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof supplied by the play itself, of which the characters are such as Addison would have delineated, and the tendency such as Addison would have promoted. That it should have been ill received would raise wonder, did we not daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise.

He was not all this time an indifferent spectator of public affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required (in 1707), the *Present State of the War, and the necessity of an augmentation* ; which, however judicious, being written on temporary topics, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, laid hold on no attention, and has naturally sunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be said of the few papers entitled the *Whig Examiner*, in which is employed all the force of gay malevolence and humorous satire. Of this paper, which just appeared and expired, Swift remarks with exultation, that "it is now down among the dead men."* He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, since personal malice is past, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effusions of wit, must wish for more of the *Whig Examiners* ; for on no occasion was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear. His *Trial of Count Tariff*, written to expose the treaty of commerce with France, lived no longer than the question that produced it.

Not long afterwards, an attempt was made to revive the *Spectator*, at a time, indeed, by no means favourable to literature, when the succession of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, discord, and confusion ; and either the turbulence of the times or the satiety of the readers put a stop to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any of those that went before it. Addison produced more than a fourth part ; and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his associates. The time that had passed during the suspension of the *Spectator*, though it had not lessened his power of humour, seems to have increased his disposition to seriousness : the proportion of his religious to his comic papers is greater than in the former series.

* From a Tory song in vogue at the time, the burden whereof is,

"And he that will this health deny,
Down among the dead men let him lie."

The *Spectator*, from its recommencement, was published only three times a week; and no discriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addison Tickell has ascribed twenty-three.*

The *Spectator* had many contributors; and Steele, whose negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to finish a paper, called loudly for the letters, of which Addison, whose materials were more, made little use; having recourse to sketches and hints, the product of his former studies, which he now reviewed and completed: among these are named by Tickell, the essays on Wit, those on the Pleasures of the Imagination, and the criticism on Milton.

When the House of Hanover took possession of the throne, it was reasonable to expect that the zeal of Addison would be suitably rewarded. Before the arrival of King George, he was made secretary to the regency, and was required by his office to send notice to Hanover that the queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addison, who was so overwhelmed with the greatness of the event, and so distracted by choice of expression, that the lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the house, and ordered him to dispatch the message. Southwell readily told what was necessary in the common style of business, and valued himself upon having done what was too hard for Addison.

He was better qualified for the *Freeholder*, a paper which he published twice a week, from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the established government, sometimes with argument, and sometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory fox-hunter.

There are, however, some strokes less elegant and less decent; such as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topic of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuse had been employed by Milton against King Charles II.

" Jacobus

Centum, exulantis viscera marsupii regis ;"

and Oldmixon delights to tell of some alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes: but that which might be expected from Milton's savageness or Oldmixon's meanness, was not suitable to the delicacy of Addison.

Steele thought the humour of the *Freeholder* too nice and gentle for such noisy times; and is reported to have said, that the ministry made use of a lute, when they should have called for a trumpet.

This year (August 2, 1716) he married the Countess Dowager of Warwick, whom he had solicited by a very long and anxious courtship, perhaps with behaviour not very unlike that of Sir Roger to his disdainful widow; and who, I am afraid, diverted herself often by playing with his passion. He is said to have first known her by becoming tutor to her son. "He formed," said Tonson, "the design of getting that lady from the time when he was first recommended

* Nos. 556, 557, 558, 559, 561, 562, 565, 567, 568, 569, 571, 574, 575, 579, 580, 582, 583, 584, 585, 590, 592, 598, 600.

into the family." In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner, he lived in the family, I know not. His advances at first were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increased; till at last the lady was persuaded to marry him, on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happiness; it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herself entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her son. Rowe's ballad of the *Despairing Shepherd* is said to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair; and it is certain that Addison has left behind him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717) he rose to his highest elevation, being made secretary of state. For this employment he might justly be supposed qualified by long practice of business, and by his regular ascent through other offices; but expectation is often disappointed: it is universally confessed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the House of Commons he could not speak, and therefore was useless to the defence of the government. In the office, says Pope, he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. What he gained in rank he lost in credit; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to solicit his dismissal, with a pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His friends palliated this relinquishment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reason, with an account of declining health, and the necessity of recess and quiet.

He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He purposed a tragedy on the death of Socrates: a story of which, as Tickell remarks, the basis is narrow, and to which I know not how love could have been appended. There would, however, have been no want either of virtue in the sentiments, or elegance in the language.

He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Christian Religion*, of which part was published after his death; and he designed to have made a new poetical version of the Psalms.

These pious compositions Pope imputed to a selfish motive, upon the credit, as he owns, of Tonson; who having quarrelled with Addison, and not loving him, said, that when he laid down the secretary's office, he intended to take orders and obtain a bishopric; "for," said he, "I always thought him a priest in his heart."

That Pope should have thought this conjecture of Tonson worth remembrance, is a proof, but indeed, so far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained some malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonson pretended but to guess it; no other mortal ever suspected it; and Pope might have reflected that a man who had been secretary of state in the ministry of Sunderland, knew a nearer way to a bishopric than by defending religion or translating the Psalms.

It is related that he had once a design to make an English dictionary, and that he considered Dr. Tillotson as the writer of highest authority. There was formerly sent to me by Mr. Locker, clerk of the Leather-

sellers' Company, who was eminent for curiosity and literature, a collection of examples collected from Tillotson's works, as Locker said, by Addison. It came too late to be of use, so I inspected it but slightly, and remember it indistinctly. I thought the passages too short.

Addison, however, did not conclude his life in peaceful studies; but relapsed, when he was near his end, to a political dispute.

It so happened that (1718-19) a controversy was agitated with great vehemence between those friends of long continuance, Addison and Steele. It may be asked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cause should set them at variance? The subject of their dispute was of great importance. The Earl of Sunderland proposed an act called the Peerage Bill, by which the number of peers should be fixed, and the king restrained from any new creation of nobility, unless when an old family should be extinct. To this the Lords would naturally agree; and the king, who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almost indifferent to the possessions of the crown, had been persuaded to consent. The only difficulty was found among the Commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual exclusion of themselves and their posterity. The bill therefore was eagerly opposed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whose speech was published.

The Lords might think their dignity diminished by improper advancements, and particularly by the introduction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a majority of Tories, in the last reign; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right with which, some time afterwards, by the instigation of Whiggism, the Commons, chosen by the people for three years, chose themselves for seven. But whatever might be the disposition of the Lords, the people had no wish to increase their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele observed in a letter to the Earl of Oxford, was to introduce an aristocracy; for a majority in the House of Lords, so limited, would have been despotic and irresistible.

To prevent this subversion of the ancient establishment, Steele, whose pen readily seconded his political passions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called the *Plebeian*. To this an answer was published by Addison, under the title of the *Old Whig*, in which it is not discovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the Commons. Steele replied by a second *Plebeian*; and, whether by ignorance or by courtesy, confined himself to his question, without any personal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed against the laws of friendship, or proprieties of decency; but controvertists cannot long retain their kindness for each other. The *Old Whig* answered the *Plebeian*, and could not forbear some contempt of "little Dicky, whose trade it was to write pamphlets." Dicky, however, did not lose his settled veneration for his friend; but contented himself with quoting some lines of Cato, which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aside during that session; and Addison died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred and sixty-five to one hundred and seventy-seven.

Every reader surely must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition. Such a controversy was *bellum plusquam civile*, as Lucan expresses it. Why could not faction find other advocates? But among the uncertainties of the human state, we are doomed to number the instability of friendship.

Of this dispute I have little knowledge but from the *Biographia Britannica*. The *Old Whig* is not inserted in Addison's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his life; why it was omitted, the biographers doubtless give the true reason: the fact was too recent; and those who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The necessity of complying with times, and of sparing persons, is the great impediment of biography. History may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever. What is known can seldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known. The delicate features of the mind, the nice discriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct, are soon obliterated; and it is surely better that caprice, obstinacy, frolic, and folly, however they might delight in the description, should be silently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unseasonable detection, a pang should be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the process of these narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin to feel myself "walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished," and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to say "nothing that is false, than all that is true."

The end of this useful life was now approaching. Addison had for some time been oppressed by shortness of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropsy; and, finding his danger pressing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and professions.

During this lingering decay, he sent, as Pope relates, a message by the Earl of Warwick to Mr. Gay, desiring to see him. Gay, who had not visited him for some time before, obeyed the summons, and found himself received with great kindness. The purpose for which the interview had been solicited was then discovered. Addison told him that he had injured him; but that, if he recovered, he would recompense him. What the injury was, he did not explain; nor did Gay ever know, but supposed that some preferment designed for him had, by Addison's intervention, been withheld.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions. Addison, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him; but his arguments and expostulations had no effect. One experiment, however, remained to be tried: when he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called; and when he desired, with great tenderness, to hear his last injunctions, told him, "I have sent for you that you may see how a Christian can die." What effect this awful scene had on the earl, I know not; he likewise died himself in a short time.



ADDISON'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH LORD WARWICK.

In Tickell's excellent elegy on his friend are these lines :

" He taught us how to live ; and—oh, too high
The price of knowledge !—taught us how to die :

in which he alludes, as he told Dr. Young, to this moving interview.

Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 17th, 1719, at Holland House, leaving no child but a daughter.*



HOLLAND HOUSE.

Of his virtue it is a sufficient testimony, that the resentment of party has transmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of those who are praised only after death ; for his merit was so generally acknowledged, that Swift, having observed that his election passed without a contest, adds that, if he proposed himself for king, he would hardly have been refused.

His zeal for his party did not extinguish his kindness for the merit of his opponents : when he was secretary in Ireland, he refused to intermit his acquaintance with Swift.

Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is so often mentioned as that timorous or sullen taciturnity, which his friends called modesty by too mild a name. Steele mentions with great tenderness " that remarkable bashfulness, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit ;" and tells us, " that his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all that are concealed." Chesterfield affirms, that " Addison was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw."

* Who died at Bilton, in Warwickshire, at a very advanced age, in 1797.

And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself, that, with respect to intellectual "wealth, he could draw bills for a thousand pounds, though he had not a guinea in his pocket."

That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obstructed and distressed,—that he was often oppressed by an improper and ungraceful timidity,—every testimony concurs to prove; but Chesterfield's representation is doubtless hyperbolic. That man cannot be supposed very unexpert in the arts of conversation and practice of life, who, without fortune or alliance, by his usefulness and dexterity, became secretary of state; and who died at forty-seven, after having not only stood long in the highest rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the most important offices of state.

The time in which he lived had reason to lament his obstinacy of silence; "for he was," says Steele, "above all men in that talent called humour, and enjoyed it in such perfection, that I have often reflected, after a night spent with him apart from all the world, that I had had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature, heightened with humour more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed." This is the fondness of a friend; let us hear what is told us by a rival: "Addison's conversation,"* says Pope, "had something in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when familiar: before strangers, or perhaps a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence."

This modesty was by no means inconsistent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the first name in modern wit; and, with Steele to echo him, used to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended against them. There is no reason to doubt that he suffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope's poetical reputation; nor is it without strong reason suspected, that by some disingenuous acts he endeavoured to obstruct it; Pope was not the only man whom he insidiously injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid.

His own powers were such as might have satisfied him with conscious excellence. Of very extensive learning he has indeed given no proofs. He seems to have had small acquaintance with the sciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets his *Dialogues on Medals* show that he had perused the works with great diligence and skill. The abundance of his own mind left him little in need of adventitious sentiments; his wit always could suggest what the occasion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man, from the depths of stratagem to the surface of affectation.

What he knew he could easily communicate. "This," says Steele, "was particular in this writer, that, when he had taken his resolution, or made his plan for what he designed to write, he would walk about a room, and dictate it into language with as much freedom and ease as any one could write it down, and attend to the coherence and grammar of what he dictated."

Pope, who can be less suspected of favouring his memory, de-

* Spence.

clares that he wrote very fluently, but was slow and scrupulous in correcting; that many of his *Spectators* were written very fast, and sent immediately to the press; and that it seemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much revision.



BILTON HOUSE.

"He would alter," says Pope, "any thing to please his friends before publication, but would not retouch his pieces afterwards; and I believe not one word in *Cato* to which I made an objection was suffered to stand."

The last line of *Cato* is Pope's, having been originally written

"And oh! 'twas this that ended *Cato's* life."

Pope might have made more objections to the six concluding lines. In the first couplet the words "from hence" are improper; and the second line is taken from Dryden's *Virgil*. Of the next couplet, the first verse, being included in the second, is therefore useless; and in the third discord is made to produce strife.

Of the course of Addison's familiar day before his marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the house with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and Colonel Brett. With one or other of these he always breakfasted. He studied all the morning, then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a servant in the Countess of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addison, kept a coffee-house on the south side of Russell-street, about two doors from Covent-garden.

Here it was that the wits of the time used to assemble. It is said, when Addison had suffered any vexation from the countess, he withdrew the company from Button's house.

From the coffee-house he went again to a tavern, where he often sat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, discontent seeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and bashfulness for confidence. It is not unlikely that Addison was first seduced to excess by the manumission which he obtained from the servile timidity of his sober hours. He that feels oppression from the presence of those to whom he knows himself superior, will desire to let loose his powers of conversation; and who that ever asked succours from Bacchus was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary?

Among those friends it was that Addison displayed the elegance of his colloquial accomplishments, which may easily be supposed such as Pope represents them. The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had passed an evening in his company, declared that he was a parson in a tye-wig, can detract little from his character; he was always reserved to strangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.

From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of sixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promised Congreve and the public a complete description of his character; but the promises of authors are like the vows of lovers. Steele thought no more on his design, or thought on it with anxiety that at last disgusted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

One slight lineament of his character Swift has preserved. It was his practice, when he found any man invincibly wrong, to flatter his opinions by acquiescence, and sink him yet deeper in absurdity. This artifice of mischief was admired by Stella; and Swift seems to approve her admiration.

His works will supply some information. It appears, from his various pictures of the world, that, with all his bashfulness, he had conversed with many distinct classes of men, had surveyed their ways with very diligent observation, and marked with great acuteness the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whose presence nothing reprehensible was out of danger; quick in discerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expose it. "There are," says Steele, "in his writings many oblique strokes upon some of the wittiest men of the age." His delight was more to excite merriment than detestation; and he detects follies rather than crimes.

If any judgment be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind, indeed, less extensive than that of Addison, will show that to write and to live are very different. Many who praise virtue, do no more than praise it. Yet it is reasonable to believe that Addison's professions and practice were at no great variance, since amidst that storm of faction in which most of his life was passed, though his station made him conspicuous, and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies; of those with whom interest or opinion united him, he had not only the esteem, but the kindness; and of others,

whom the violence of opposition drove against him, though he might lose the love, he retained the reverence.

It is justly observed by Tickell, that he employed wit on the side of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper use of wit himself, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally subservient to the cause of reason and of truth. He has dissipated the prejudices that had long connected gaiety with vice, and easiness of manners with laxity of principles. He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of literary character, "above all Greek, above all Roman fame." No greater felicity can genius attain, than that of having purified intellectual pleasure, separated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiousness; of having taught a succession of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodness; and, if I may use expressions yet more awful, of having "turned many to righteousness."

Addison, in his life, and for some time afterwards, was considered by a greater part of readers as supremely excelling both in poetry and criticism. Part of his reputation may be probably ascribed to the advancement of his fortune: when, as Swift observes, he became a statesman, and saw poets waiting at his levee, it was no wonder that praise was accumulated upon him. Much likewise may be more honourably ascribed to his personal character: he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel.

But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame; and Addison is to pass through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindness or interest once raised too high is in danger, lest the next age should, by the vengeance of criticism, sink it in the same proportion. A great writer has lately styled him "an indifferent poet, and a worse critic."

His poetry is first to be considered; of which it must be confessed that it has not often those felicities of diction which give lustre to sentiment, or that vigour of sentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or transport; there is very rarely the awfulness of grandeur, and not very often the splendour of elegance. He thinks justly; but he thinks faintly. This is his general character; to which, doubtless, many single passages will furnish exception.

Yet, if he seldom reaches supreme excellence, he rarely sinks into dulness, and is still more rarely entangled in absurdity. He did not trust his powers enough to be negligent. There is in most of his compositions a calmness and equability deliberate and cautious; sometimes with little that delights, but seldom with any thing that offends.

Of this kind seem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has something in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his account of the English Poets, he used to speak as a "poor thing;" but it is not worse than his usual strain. He has said, not very judiciously, in his character of Waller,

"Thy verse could show ev'n Cromwell's innocence;
And compliment the storms that bore him hence.

Oh, had thy Muse not come an age too soon,
But seen great Nassau on the British throne,
How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page !"

What is this but to say, that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for King William ? Addison, however, never printed the piece.

The Letter from Italy has been always praised, but has never been praised beyond its merit. It is more correct, with less appearance of labour, and more elegant, with less ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is, however, one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken :

" Fir'd with that name—
I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a nobler strain."

To *bridle* a goddess is no very delicate idea ; but why must she be *bridled* ? because she *longs to launch* ; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle* : and whither will she *launch* ? into a *nobler strain*. She is in the first line a *horse*, in the second a *boat* ; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse* or his *boat* from *singing*.

The next composition is the far-famed Campaign, which Dr. War-ton has termed a "gazette in rhyme," with harshness not often used by the good nature of his criticism. Before a censure so severe is admitted, let us consider that war is a frequent subject of poetry, and then inquire who has described it with more justness and force. Many of our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory ; yet Addison's is confessedly the best performance : his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the dust of learning ; his images are not borrowed merely from books. The superiority which he confers upon his hero is not personal prowess and "mighty bone," but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his passions, and the power of consulting his own mind in the midst of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

It may be observed that the last line is imitated by Pope :

" Marl'brough's exploits appear divinely bright—
Rais'd of themselves their genuine charms they boast,
And those that paint them truest, praise them most."

This Pope had in his thoughts ; but not knowing how to use what was not his own, he spoiled the thought when he had borrowed it :

" The well-sung woes shall sooth my pensive ghost ;
He best can paint* them who shall feel them most."

Martial exploits may be *painted* ; perhaps *woes* may be *painted* ; but they are surely not *painted* by being *well sung* : it is not easy to paint in song, or to sing in colours.

No passage in the Campaign has been more often mentioned than the simile of the angel, which is said in the *Tatler* to be "one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man," and is therefore worthy of attentive consideration. Let it be first inquired whether it be a simile. A poetical simile is the discovery of likeness

* "Paint" means (says Dr. War-ton) express or describe them.

between two actions in their general nature dissimilar, or of causes terminating by different operations in some resemblance of effect. But the mention of another like consequence from a like cause, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a simile, but an exemplification. It is not a simile to say that the Thames waters fields, as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland, so *Ætna* vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace says of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verse, as a river swollen with rain rushes from the mountain; or of himself, that his genius wanders in quest of poetical decorations, as the bee wanders to collect honey; he, in either case, produces a simile; the mind is impressed with the resemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been described as writing with the copiousness and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finished his own poetry with the same care as Isocrates polished his orations,—instead of similitude, he would have exhibited almost identity; he would have given the same portraits with different names. In the poem now examined, when the English are represented as gaining a fortified pass, by repetition of attack and perseverance of resolution, their obstinacy of courage and vigour of onset is well illustrated by the sea, that breaks with incessant battery the dikes of Holland. This is a simile: but when Addison, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's person, tells us that "Achilles thus was formed with every grace," here is no simile, but a mere exemplification. A simile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater distance: an exemplification may be considered as two parallel lines, which run on together without approximation never far separated, and never joined.

Marlborough is so like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almost the same, and performed by both in the same manner. Marlborough "teaches the battle to rage;" the angel "directs the storm:" Marlborough is "unmoved in peaceful thought;" the angel is "calm and serene:" Marlborough stands "unmoved amidst the shock of hosts;" the angel rides "calm in the whirlwind." The lines on Marlborough are just and noble; but the simile gives almost the same images a second time.

But perhaps this thought, though hardly a simile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of research or dexterity of application. Of this Dr. Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. "If I had set," said he, "ten school-boys to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the angel, I should not have been surprised."

The opera of *Rosamond*, though it is seldom mentioned, is one of the first of Addison's compositions. The subject is well chosen, the fiction is pleasing, and the praise of Marlborough, for which the scene gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence must be, the product of good luck, improved by genius. The thoughts are sometimes great, and sometimes tender; the versification is easy and gay. There is doubtless some advantage in the shortness of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue seems commonly better than the songs.

The two comic characters of Sir Trusty and Grideline, though of no great value, are yet such as the poet intended.* Sir Trusty's account of the death of Rosamond is, I think, too grossly absurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant; engaging in its process, and pleasing in its conclusion. If Addison had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled.

The tragedy of *Cato*, which, contrary to the rule observed in selecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into the late collection, is unquestionably the noblest production of Addison's genius. Of a work so much read, it is difficult to say any thing new. About things on which the public thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of *Cato* it has been not unjustly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama; rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here "excites or assuages emotion:" here is "no magical power of raising phantastic terror or wild anxiety." The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care; we consider not what they are doing or what they are suffering; we wish only to know what they have to say. *Cato* is a being above our solicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedless confidence. To the rest neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongst them that strongly attracts either affection or esteem. But they are made the vehicles of such sentiments and such expression, that there is scarcely a scene in the play which the reader does not wish to impress upon his memory.

When *Cato* was shown to Pope, he advised the author to print it without any theatrical exhibition; supposing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the stage. The emulation of parties made it successful beyond expectation; and its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffected elegance, and chill philosophy.

The universality of applause, however it might quell the censure of common mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed dislike; but his dislike was not merely capricious. He found and showed many faults; he showed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteness, such as ought to rescue his criticism from oblivion; though, at last, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppress.

Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reason, by remarking, that,

"A defence is to be paid to a general applause, when it appears that the applause is natural and spontaneous; but that little regard is to be had to it, when it is affected and artificial. Of all the tragedies which in his memory have had vast and violent runs, not one has been excellent, few have been tolerable, most have been scandalous. When a poet writes a tragedy who knows he has judgment,

* But, according to Warton, "ought not to have intended."

and who feels he has genius, that poet presumes upon his own merit, and scorns to make a cabal. That people come coolly to the representation of such a tragedy, without any violent expectation, or delusive imagination, or invincible prepossession; that such an audience is liable to receive the impressions which the poem shall naturally make on them, and to judge by their own reason and their own judgments, and that reason and judgment are calm and serene, not formed by nature to make proselytes, and to control and lord it over the imaginations of others. But that when an author writes a tragedy who knows he has neither genius or judgment, he has recourse to the making a party, and he endeavours to make up in industry what is wanting in talent, and to supply by poetical craft the absence of poetical art: that such an author is humbly contented to raise men's passions by a plot without doors, since he despairs of doing it by that which he brings upon the stage. That party and passion, and prepossession, are clamorous and tumultuous things, and so much the more clamorous and tumultuous by how much the more erroneous: that they domineer and tyrannise over the imaginations of persons who want judgment, and sometimes too of those who have it; and, like a fierce and outrageous torrent, bear down all opposition before them."

He then condemns the neglect of poetical justice, which is always one of his favourite principles.

"Tis certainly the duty of every tragic poet, by the exact distribution of poetical justice, to imitate the divine dispensation, and to inculcate a particular Providence. 'Tis true, indeed, upon the stage of the world the wicked sometimes prosper, and the guiltless suffer. But that is permitted by the governor of the world, to show, from the attribute of his infinite justice, that there is a compensation in futurity; to prove the immortality of the human soul, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments. But the poetical persons in tragedy exist no longer than the reading or the representation; the whole extent of their enmity is circumscribed by those; and therefore, during that reading or representation, according to their merits or demerits they must be punished or rewarded. If this is not done, there is no impartial distribution of poetical justice, no instructive lecture of a particular Providence, and no imitation of the divine dispensation. And yet the author of this tragedy does not only run counter to this, in the fate of his principal character, but every where, throughout it, makes virtue suffer, and vice triumph; for not only Cato is vanquished by Cæsar, but the treachery and perfidiousness of Syphax prevail over the honest simplicity and the credulity of Juba; and the sly subtlety and dissimulation of Portius over the generous frankness and open-heartedness of Marcus."

Whatever pleasure there may be in seeing crimes punished and virtue rewarded, yet, since wickedness often prospers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it prosperity on the stage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The stage may sometimes gratify our wishes; but if it be truly the "*mirror of life*," it ought to show us sometimes what we are to expect.

Dennis objects to the characters, that they are not natural or reason-

able ; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are seen every day, it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct shall be tried. It is, however, not useless to consider what he says of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his son's death.

"Nor is the grief of Cato, in the fourth act, one jot more in nature than that of his son and Lucia in the third. Cato receives the news of his son's death not only with dry eyes, but with a sort of satisfaction ; and in the same page sheds tears for the calamity of his country, and does the same thing in the next page upon the bare apprehension of the danger of his friends. Now, since the love of one's country is the love of one's countrymen, as I have shown upon another occasion, I desire to ask these questions : Of all our countrymen, which do we love most, those whom we know, or those whom we know not ? And of those whom we know, which do we cherish most, our friends or our enemies ? And of our friends, which are the dearest to us, those who are related to us, or those who are not ? And of all our relations, for which have we most tenderness, for those who are near to us, or for those who are remote ? And of our near relations, which are the nearest, and consequently the dearest to us, our offspring, or others ? Our offspring most certainly ; as Nature, or, in other words, Providence, has wisely contrived for the preservation of mankind. Now, does it not follow, from what has been said, that for a man to receive the news of his son's death with dry eyes, and to weep at the same time for the calamities of his country, is a wretched affectation and a miserable inconsistency ? Is not that, in plain English, to receive with dry eyes the news of the deaths of those for whose sake our country is a name so dear to us, and at the same time to shed tears for those for whose sakes our country is not a name so dear to us ?"

But this formidable assailant is less resistible when he attacks the probability of the action, and the reasonableness of the plan. Every critical reader must remark, that Addison has, with a scrupulosity almost unexampled on the English stage, confined himself in time to a single day, and in place to rigorous unity. The scene never changes, and the whole action of the play passes in the great hall of Cato's house at Utica. Much, therefore, is done in the hall, for which any other place would be more fit ; and this impropriety affords Dennis many hints of merriment and opportunities of triumph. The passage is long ; but as such disquisitions are not common, and the objections are skilfully formed and vigorously urged, those who delight in critical controversy will not think it tedious.

"Upon the departure of Portius, Sempronius makes but one soliloquy ; and immediately in comes Syphax, and then the two politicians are at it immediately. They lay their heads together, with their snuff-boxes in their hands, as Mr. Bayes has it, and feague it away. But, in the midst of that wise scene, Syphax seems to give a seasonable caution to Sempronius :

*' Syph. But is it true, Sempronius, that your senate
Is call'd together ? Gods ! thou must be cautious ;
Cato has piercing eyes.'*

"There is a great deal of caution shown, indeed, in meeting in a governor's own hall to carry on their plot against him. Whatever

opinion they have of his eyes, I suppose they have none of his ears, or they would never have talked at this foolish rate so near :

‘ Gods ! thou must be cautious.’

Oh ! yes, very cautious : for if Cato should overhear you, and turn you off for politicians, Cæsar would never take you ; no, Cæsar would never take you.

“ When Cato, act ii., turns the senators out of the hall, upon pretence of acquainting Juba with the result of their debates, he appears to me to do a thing which is neither reasonable nor civil. Juba might certainly have better been made acquainted with the result of that debate in some private apartment of the palace. But the poet was driven upon this absurdity to make way for another ; and that is, to give Juba an opportunity to demand Marcia of her father. But the quarrel and rage of Juba and Syphax, in the same act ; the invectives of Syphax against the Romans and Cato ; the advice that he gives Juba, in her father’s hall, to bear away Marcia by force ; and his brutal and clamorous rage upon his refusal, and at a time when Cato was scarcely out of sight, and perhaps not out of hearing, at least some of his guards or domestics must necessarily be supposed to be within hearing,—is a thing that is so far from being probable, that it is hardly possible.

“ Sempronius, in the second act, comes back once more in the same morning to the governor’s hall, to carry on the conspiracy with Syphax against the governor, his country, and his family ; which is so stupid that it is below the wisdom of the O——’s, the Mac’s, and the Teague’s ; even Eustace Commins himself would never have gone to Justice-hall to have conspired against the government. If officers at Portsmouth should lay their heads together, in order to the carrying off* J—— G——’s niece or daughter, would they meet in J—— G——’s hall, to carry on that conspiracy ? There would be no necessity for their meeting there, at least till they came to the execution of their plot, because there would be other places to meet in. There would be no probability that they should meet there, because there would be places more private and more commodious. Now there ought to be nothing in a tragical action but what is necessary or probable.

“ But treason is not the only thing that is carried on in this hall ; that, and love, and philosophy, take their turns in it, without any manner of necessity or probability occasioned by the action, as duly and as regularly, without interrupting one another, as if there were a triple league between them, and a mutual agreement that each should give place to, and make way for, the other, in a due and orderly succession.

“ We now come to the third act. Sempronius, in this act, comes into the governor’s hall with the leaders of the mutiny ; but as soon as Cato is gone, Sempronius, who but just before had acted like an unparalleled knave, discovers himself, like an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in the conspiracy.

* The person meant by the initials J. G. is Sir John Gibson, lieutenant-governor of Portsmouth in the year 1710, and afterwards. He was much beloved in the army, and by the common soldiers called Johnny Gibson.

Semp. Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
They're thrown neglected by ; but if it fails,
They're sure to die like dogs, as you shall do.
Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
To sudden death—'

"'Tis true, indeed, the second leader says, there are none there but friends ; but is that possible at such a juncture ? Can a parcel of rogues attempt to assassinate the governor of a town of war, in his own house, in mid-day ? and, after they are discovered and defeated, can there be none near them but friends ? Is it not plain, from these words of Sempronius,

' Here, take these factious monsters, drag them forth
To sudden death—'

and from the entrance of the guards upon the word of command, that those guards were within ear-shot ? Behold Sempronius then palpably discovered. How comes it to pass, then, that instead of being hanged up with the rest, he remains secure in the governor's hall, and there carries on his conspiracy against the government, the third time in the same day, with his old comrade Syphax, who enters at the same time that the guards are carrying away the leaders, big with the news of the defeat of Sempronius ; though where he had his intelligence so soon is difficult to imagine ! And now the reader may expect a very extraordinary scene ; there is not abundance of spirit indeed, nor a great deal of passion, but there is wisdom more than enough to supply all defects.

Syph. Our first design, my friend, has prov'd abortive ;
Still there remains an after-game to play :
My troops are mounted, their Numidian steeds
Snuff up the winds, and long to scour the desert.
Let but Sempronius lead us in our flight,
We'll force the gate, where Marcus keeps his guard,
And hew down all that would oppose our passage ;
A day will bring us into Caesar's camp.'

Semp. Confusion ! I have fail'd of half my purpose ;
Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind.'

Well ! but though he tells us the half purpose he has failed of, he does not tell us the half that he has carried. But what does he mean by

' Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind ?

He is now in her own house ! and we have neither seen her, nor heard of her, any where else since the play began. But now let us hear Syphax :

' What hinders then, but that you find her out,
And hurry her away by manly force ?

But what does old Syphax mean by finding her out ? They talk as if she were as hard to be found as a hare in a frosty morning.

Semp. But how to gain admission ?

Oh ! she is found out then, it seems.

'But how to gain admission! for access
Is given to none but Juba and her brothers.'

But, raillery apart, why access to Juba? For he was owned and received as a lover neither by the father nor by the daughter. Well, but let that pass. Syphax puts Sempronius out of pain immediately; and being a Numidian, abounding in wiles, supplies him with a stratagem for admission, that, I believe, is a non-pareille.

'*Syph.* Thou shalt have Juba's dress and Juba's guards;
The doors will open when Numidia's prince
Seems to appear before them.'

"Sempronius is, it seems, to pass for Juba in full day at Cato's house, where they were both so very well known, by having Juba's dress and his guards; as if one of the marshals of France could pass for the Duke of Bavaria at noon-day, at Versailles, by having his dress and liveries. But how does Syphax pretend to help Sempronius to young Juba's dress? Does he serve him in a double capacity, as a general and master of his wardrobe? But why Juba's guards? For the devil of any guards has Juba appeared with yet. Well! though this is a mighty politic invention, yet methinks they might have done without it; for, since the advice that Syphax gave to Sempronius was,

'To hurry her away by manly force,'

in my opinion, the shortest and likeliest way of coming at the lady was by demolishing, instead of putting on an impertinent disguise to circumvent two or three slaves. But Sempronius, it seems, is of another opinion. He extols to the skies the invention of old Syphax:

'*Semp.* Heavens! what a thought was there!'

"Now, I appeal to the reader, if I have not been as good as my word. Did I not tell him, that I would lay before him a very wise scene?

"But now let us lay before the reader that part of the scenery of the fourth act, which may show the absurdities which the author has run into, through the indiscreet observance of the unity of place. I do not remember that Aristotle has said any thing expressly concerning the unity of place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has said enough in the rules which he has laid down for the chorus. For, by making the chorus an essential part of tragedy, and by bringing it on the stage immediately after the opening of the scene, and retaining it till the very catastrophe, he has so determined and fixed the place of action, that it was impossible for an author on the Grecian stage to break through that unity. I am of opinion, that if a modern tragic poet can preserve the unity of place without destroying the probability of the incidents, 'tis always best for him to do it; because, by the preserving of that unity, as we have taken notice above, he adds grace and clearness and comeliness to the representation. But since there are no express rules about it, and we are under no compulsion to keep it, since we have no chorus as the Grecian poet had; if it cannot be preserved, without rendering the greater part of the incidents unreason-

able and absurd, and perhaps sometimes monstrous, 'tis certainly better to break it.

"Now comes bully Sempronius, comically accoutred and equipped with his Numidian dress and his Numidian guards. Let the reader attend to him with all his ears, for the words of the wise are precious :

'Semp. The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her covert.'

"Now I would fain know why this deer is said to be lodged, since we have not heard one word, since the play began, of her being at all out of harbour : and if we consider the discourse with which she and Lucia begin the act, we have reason to believe that they had hardly been talking of such matters in the street. However, to pleasure Sempronius, let us suppose, for once, that the deer is lodged.

'The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her covert.'

"If he had seen her in the open field, what occasion had he to track her, when he had so many Numidian dogs at his heels, which, with one halloo, he might have set upon her haunches ? If he did not see her in the open field, how could he possibly track her ? If he had seen her in the street, why did he not set upon her in the street, since through the street she must be carried at last ? Now here, instead of having his thoughts upon his business, and upon the present danger ; instead of meditating and contriving how he shall pass with his mistress through the southern gate, where her brother Marcus is upon the guard, and where he would certainly prove an impediment to him, which is the Roman word for the baggage ; instead of doing this, Sempronius is entertaining himself with whimsies :

*'Semp. How will the young Numidian rave to see
His mistress lost ! If aught could glad my soul,
Beyond th' enjoyment of so bright a prize,
'Twould be to torture that young, gay Barbarian.
But hark ! what noise ! Death to my hopes ! 'tis he,
'Tis Juba's self ! There is but one way left !
He must be murder'd, and a passage cut
Through those his guards.'*

"Pray, what are 'those his guards ?' I thought, at present, that Juba's guards had been Sempronius's tools, and had been dangling after his heels.

"But now let us sum up all these absurdities together. Sempronius goes at noon-day, in Juba's clothes, and with Juba's guards, to Cato's palace, in order to pass for Juba, in a place where they were both so very well known : he meets Juba there, and resolves to murder him with his own guards. Upon the guards appearing a little bashful, he threatens them :

*'Hah ! dastards, do you tremble !
Or act like men ; or, by yon azure heav'n !'*

"But the guards still remaining restive, Sempronius himself attacks Juba, while each of the guards is representing Mr. Spectator's sign of the Gaper, awed, it seems, and terrified by Sempronius's threats. Juba kills Sempronius, and takes his own army prisoners.

and carries them in triumph away to Cato. Now, I would fain know if any part of Mr. Bayes's tragedy is so full of absurdity as this?

"Upon hearing the clash of swords, Lucia and Marcia come in. The question is, why no men come in upon hearing the noise of swords in the governor's hall? Where was the governor himself? where were his guards? where were his servants? Such an attempt as this, so near the person of a governor of a place of war, was enough to alarm the whole garrison; and yet, for almost half an hour after Sempronius was killed, we find none of those appear who were the likeliest in the world to be alarmed; and the noise of swords is made to draw only two poor women thither, who were most certain to run away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's coming in, Lucia appears in all the symptoms of an hysterical gentlewoman:

*'Luc. Sure 'twas the clash of swords! my troubled heart
Is so cast down, and sunk amidst its sorrows,
It throbs with fear, and aches at every sound!'*

And immediately her old whimsey returns upon her:

*'O Marcia, should thy brothers, for my sake—
I die away with horror at the thought.'*

She fancies that there can be no cutting of throats, but it must be for her. If this is tragical, I would fain know what is comical. Well! upon this they spy the body of Sempronius; and Marcia, deluded by the habit, it seems, takes him for Juba; for, says she,

'The face is muffled up within the garment.'

"Now, how a man could fight, and fall with his face muffled up in his garment, is, I think, a little hard to conceive. Besides, Juba, before he killed him, knew him to be Sempronius. It was not by his garment that he knew this; it was by his face then: his face therefore was not muffled. Upon seeing this man with his muffled face, Marcia falls a-raving; and owning her passion for the supposed defunct, begins to make his funeral oration. Upon which Juba enters listening, I suppose on tip-toe; for I cannot imagine how any one can enter listening in any other posture. I would fain know how it comes to pass, that during all this time he had sent nobody, no, not so much as a candle-snuffer, to take away the dead body of Sempronius. Well! but let us regard him listening. Having left his apprehension behind him, he, at first, applies what Marcia says to Sempronius. But finding at last, with much ado, that he himself is the happy man, he quits his eave-dropping, and discovers himself just time enough to prevent his being cuckolded by a dead man, of whom the moment before he had appeared so jealous; and greedily intercepts the bliss which was fondly designed for one who could not be the better for it. But here I must ask a question: how comes Juba to listen here, who had not listened before throughout the play? Or how comes he to be the only person of this tragedy who listens, when love and treason were so often talked in so public a place as a hall? I am afraid the author was driven upon all these absurdities only to introduce this miserable mistake of Marcia, which,

after all, is much below the dignity of tragedy, as any thing is which is the effect or result of trick.

"But let us come to the scenery of the fifth act. Cato appears first upon the scene, sitting in a thoughtful posture; in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, a drawn sword on the table by him. Now let us consider the place in which this sight is presented to us. The place, forsooth, is a long hall. Let us suppose that any one should place himself in this posture in the midst of one of our halls in London; that he should appear *solus*, in a sullen posture, a drawn sword on the table by him; in his hand Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, translated lately by Bernard Lintot: I desire the reader to consider whether such a person as this would pass, with them who beheld him, for a great patriot, a great philosopher, or a general, or some whimsical person who fancied himself all these? and whether the people who belonged to the family would think that such a person had a design upon their midriffs or his own?

"In short, that Cato should sit long enough in the aforesaid posture, in the midst of this large hall, to read over Plato's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul, which is a lecture of two long hours; that he should propose to himself to be private there upon that occasion; that he should be angry with his son for intruding there; then, that he should leave this hall upon the pretence of sleep, give himself the mortal wound in his bedchamber, and then be brought back into that hall to expire, purely to show his good-breeding, and save his friends the trouble of coming up to his bedchamber; all this appears to me to be improbable, incredible, impossible."

Such is the censure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expresses it, perhaps "too much horse-play in his raillery;" but if his jests are coarse, his arguments are strong. Yet, as we love better to be pleased than be taught, Cato is read, and the critic is neglected.

Flushed with consciousness of these detections of absurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the sentiments of Cato; but he then amused himself with petty cavils and minute objections.

Of Addison's smaller poems no particular mention is necessary; they have little that can employ or require a critic. The parallel of the princes and gods, in his verses to Kneller, is often happy; but is too well known to be quoted.

His translations, so far as I have compared them, want the exactness of a scholar. That he understood his authors cannot be doubted; but his versions will not teach others to understand them, being too licentiously paraphrastical. They are, however, for the most part, smooth and easy; and, what is the first excellence of a translator, such as may be read with pleasure by those who do not know the originals.

His poetry is polished and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has sometimes a striking line, or a shining paragraph; but on the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and shows more dexterity than strength. He was, however, one of our earliest examples of correctness.

The versification which he had learned from Dryden he debased rather than refined. His rhymes are often dissonant; in his *Georgic*

he admits broken lines. He uses both triplets and alexandrines; but triplets more frequently in his translations than his other works. The mere structure of verses seems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very smooth in *Rosamond*, and too smooth in *Cato*.

Addison is now to be considered as a critic; a name which the present generation is scarcely willing to allow him. His criticism is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than scientific; and he is considered as deciding by taste* rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for those who have grown wise by the labour of others, to add a little of their own, and overlook their masters. Addison is now despised by some who perhaps would never have seen his defects but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the characters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk was in his time rarely to be found. Men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world, any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured. His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity, by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. When he showed them their defects, he showed them likewise that they might be easily supplied. His attempt succeeded; inquiry was awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited; and from this time to our own, life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had not many years before scattered criticism over his prefaces with very little parsimony; but though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write than for those that read only to talk.

An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks, being superficial, might be easily understood; and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps have been admired, and the poem still have been neglected; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility, he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.

He descended now and then to lower disquisitions; and by a serious display of the beauties of *Chevy Chase* exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaffe, who bestowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb*; and to the contempt of Dennis, who, considering the fundamental position of his criticism, that *Chevy Chase* pleases, and ought to please, because it is natural, observes, "that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombast or tumour, which soars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation,

* "Taste must decide."—WARTON.

which forsakes nature in quest of something unsuitable; and by imbecility, which degrades nature by faintness and diminution, by obscuring its appearances and weakening its effects." In *Cherry Chase* there is not much of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind.

Before the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his essays on Wit, and on the Pleasures of Imagination, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principles of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance,* such as his contemners will not easily attain.

As a describer of life and manners, he must be allowed to stand perhaps the first of the first rank. His humour, which, as Steele observes, is peculiar to himself, is so happily diffused as to give the grace of novelty to domestic scenes and daily occurrences. He never "outsteps the modesty of nature," nor raises merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by distortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with so much fidelity that he can be hardly said to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air so much original that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wisdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious; he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly sceptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being. Truth is shown sometimes as the phantom of a vision; sometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory; sometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy; and sometimes steps forth in the confidence of reason. She wears a thousand dresses, and in all is pleasing.

'Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.'

His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction; he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connexions, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation: yet if his language had been less idiomatical, it might have lost somewhat of its genuine Anglicism. What he attempted he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wish to

* Far, in Dr. Warton's opinion, beyond Dryden.

be energetic ;* he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude nor affected brevity ; his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.



WILLIAM CONGREVE.†

(1672-1728.)

William Congreve descended from a family in Staffordshire, of so great antiquity that it claims a place among the few that extend their line beyond the Norman conquest ; and was the son of William Congreve, second son of Richard Congreve, of Congreve and Stratton. He visited, once at least, the residence of his ancestors ; and, I believe, more places than one are still shown, in groves and gardens, where he is related to have written his *Old Bachelor*.

Neither the time nor place of his birth are certainly known ; if the inscription upon his monument be true, he was born in 1672. For the place : it was said by himself that he owed his nativity to England, and by every body else that he was born in Ireland. Sou-

* But Warton says he *sometimes* is so ; and in another manuscript note he adds *often* so.

† Johnson.

them mentioned him with sharp censure, as a man that meanly disowned his native country. The biographers assign his nativity to Bardso, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, from the account given by himself, as they suppose, to Jacob.

To doubt whether a man of eminence has told the truth about his own birth, is, in appearance, to be very deficient in candour; yet nobody can live long without knowing that falsehoods of convenience or vanity, falsehoods from which no evil immediately visible ensues, except the general degradation of human testimony, are very lightly uttered; and once uttered, are sullenly supported. Boileau, who desired to be thought a rigorous and steady moralist, having told a petty lie to Louis XIV., continued it afterwards by false dates, thinking himself obliged *in honour*, says his admirer, to maintain what, when he said it, was so well received.

Wherever Congreve was born, he was educated first at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Dublin, his father having some military employment that stationed him in Ireland; but, after having passed through the usual preparatory studies, as may be reasonably supposed with great celerity and success, his father thought it proper to assign him a profession by which something might be gotten; and about the time of the Revolution, sent him at the age of sixteen to study law in the Middle Temple, where he lived for several years, but with very little attention to statutes or reports.

His disposition to become an author appeared very early, as he very early felt that force of imagination, and possessed that copiousness of sentiment, by which intellectual pleasure can be given. His first performance was a novel called *Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled*: it is praised by the biographers, who quote some part of the preface, that is, indeed, for such a time of life uncommonly judicious. I would rather praise it than read it.

His first dramatic labour was *The Old Bachelor*, of which he says, in his defence against Collier, "that comedy was written, as several know, some years before it was acted. When I wrote it, I had little thoughts of the stage, but did it to amuse myself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness. Afterwards, through my indiscretion, it was seen, and in some little time more it was acted; and I, through the remainder of my indiscretion, suffered myself to be drawn into the prosecution of a difficult and thankless study, and to be involved in a perpetual war with knaves and fools."

There seems to be a strange affection in authors, of appearing to have done every thing by chance. *The Old Bachelor* was written for amusement, in the languor of convalescence. Yet it is apparently composed with great elaborateness of dialogue and incessant ambition of wit. The age of the writer considered, it is indeed a very wonderful performance; for, whenever written, it was acted (1693) when he was not more than twenty-one years old, and was then recommended by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Southern, and Mr. Maynwaring. Dryden said that he never had seen such a first play; but they found it deficient in some things requisite to the success of its exhibition, and by their greater experience fitted it for the stage. Southern used to relate of one comedy, probably of this, that when Congreve read it to the players, he pronounced it so wretchedly that they had almost re-

jected it; but they were afterwards so well persuaded of its excellence, that, for half a year before it was acted, the manager allowed its author the privilege of the house.

Few plays have ever been so beneficial to the writer; for it procured him the patronage of Halifax, who immediately made him one of the commissioners for licensing coaches, and soon after gave him a place in the Pipe Office, and another in the Customs of six hundred pounds a year. Congreve's conversation must surely have been at least equally pleasing with his writings.

Such a comedy, written at such an age, requires some consideration. As the lighter species of dramatic poetry professes the imitation of common life, of real manners, and daily incidents, it apparently presupposes a familiar knowledge of many characters, and exact observation of the passing world; the difficulty, therefore, is to conceive how this knowledge can be obtained by a boy.

But if *The Old Bachelor* be more nearly examined, it will be found to be one of those comedies which may be made by a mind vigorous and acute, and furnished with comic characters by the perusal of other poets, without much actual commerce with mankind. The dialogue is one constant reciprocation of conceits or clash of wit, in which nothing flows necessarily from the occasion, or is dictated by nature. The characters both of men and women are either fictitious and artificial, as those of Heartwell and the ladies; or easy and common, as Wittol, a tame idiot; Bluff, a swaggering coward; and Fondlewife, a jealous puritan; and the catastrophe arises from a mistake not very probably produced, by marrying a woman in a mask.

Yet this gay comedy, when all these deductions are made, will still remain the work of very powerful and fertile faculties; the dialogue is quick and sparkling, the incidents such as seize the attention, and the wit so exuberant that it "o'er-informs its tenement."

Next year he gave another specimen of his abilities in *The Double Dealer*, which was not received with equal kindness. He writes to his patron, the Lord Halifax, a dedication, in which he endeavours to reconcile the reader to that which found few friends among the audience. These apologies are always useless: *de gustibus non est disputandum*; men may be convinced, but they cannot be pleased, against their will. But though taste is obstinate, it is very variable; and time often prevails, when arguments have failed.

Queen Mary conferred upon both those plays the honour of her presence; and when she died, soon after, Congreve testified his gratitude by a despicable effusion of elegiac pastoral; a composition in which all is unnatural and yet nothing is new.

In another year (1695) his prolific pen produced *Love for Love*, a comedy of nearer alliance to life, and exhibiting more real manners than either of the former. The character of Foresight was then common. Dryden calculated nativities; both Cromwell and King William had their lucky days; and Shaftesbury himself, though he had no religion, was said to regard predictions. The Sailor is not accounted very natural, but he is very pleasant.

With this play was opened the new theatre, under the direction of Betterton, the tragedian, where he exhibited, two years afterwards,

(1687) *The Mourning Bride*, a tragedy so written as to show him sufficiently qualified for either kind of dramatic poetry.

In this play, of which, when he afterwards revised it, he reduced the versification to greater regularity, there is more bustle than sentiment; the plot is busy and intricate, and the events take hold on the attention; but, except a very few passages, we are rather amused with noise, and perplexed with stratagem, than entertained with any true delineation of natural characters. This, however, was received with more benevolence than any other of his works, and still continues to be acted and applauded.

But whatever objections may be made either to his comic or tragic excellence, they are lost at once in the blaze of admiration, when it is remembered that he had produced these four plays before he had passed his twenty-fifth year; before other men, even such as are some time to shine in eminence, have passed their probation of literature, or presume to hope for any other notice than such as is bestowed on diligence and inquiry. Among all the efforts of early genius which literary history records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.

About this time began the long-continued controversy between Collier and the poets. In the reign of Charles the First, the puritans had raised a violent clamour against the drama, which they considered as an entertainment not lawful to Christians, an opinion held by them in common with the Church of Rome; and Prynne published *Histrio-mastix*, a huge volume, in which stage-plays were censured. The outrages and crimes of the puritans brought afterwards their whole system of doctrine into disrepute, and from the Restoration the poets and players were left at quiet; for to have molested them would have had the appearance of a tendency to puritanical malignity.

This danger, however, was worn away by time; and Collier, a fierce and implacable nonjuror, knew that an attack upon the theatre would never make him suspected for a puritan; he therefore (1698) published *A short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, I believe with no other motive than religious zeal and honest indignation. He was formed for a controvertist; with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic; and with all those powers exalted and invigorated by just confidence in his cause.

Thus qualified and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to D'Urfey. His onset was violent: those passages which, while they stood single, had passed with little notice, when they were accumulated and exposed together excited horror; the wise and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge.

Nothing now remained for the poets but to resist or fly. Dryden's conscience, or his prudence, angry as he was, withheld him from the conflict. Congreve and Vanbrugh attempted answers. Congreve, a very young man, elated with success, and impatient of censure, assumed an air of confidence and security. His chief artifice of contro-

versy is to retort upon his adversary his own words; he is very angry, and, hoping to conquer Collier with his own weapons, allows himself in the use of every term of contumely and contempt. But he has the sword without the arm of Scanderbeg; he has his antagonist's coarseness, but not his strength. Collier replied; for contest was his delight: he was not to be frightened from his purpose or his prey.

The cause of Congreve was not tenable; whatever glosses he might use for the defence or palliation of single passages, the general tenor and tendency of his plays must always be condemned. It is acknowledged, with universal conviction, that the perusal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated.

The stage found other advocates, and the dispute was protracted through ten years; but at last comedy grew more modest, and Collier lived to see the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre.

Of the powers by which this important victory was achieved, a quotation from *Love for Love*, and the remark upon it, may afford a specimen:

"*Sir Sams.* Samson's a very good name, for your Samsons were strong dogs from the beginning.

"*Angel.* Have a care; if you remember, the strongest Samson of your name pulled an old house over his head at last."

"Here you have the sacred history burlesqued; and Samson once more brought into the house of Dagon, to make sport for the Philistines."

Congreve's last play was *The Way of the World*; which, though, as he hints in his dedication, it was written with great labour and much thought, was received with so little favour, that, being in a high degree offended and disgusted, he resolved to commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience.

From this time his life ceased to the public; he lived for himself and for his friends; and among his friends was able to name every man of his time whom wit and elegance had raised to reputation. It may be therefore reasonably supposed that his manners were polite and his conversation pleasing.

He seems not to have taken much pleasure in writing, as he contributed nothing to the *Spectator*, and only one paper to the *Tatler*, though published by men with whom he might be supposed willing to associate; and though he lived many years after the publication of his *Miscellaneous Poems*, yet he added nothing to them, but lived on in literary indolence; engaged in no controversy, contending with no rival; neither soliciting flattery by public commendations, nor provoking enmity by malignant criticism; but passing his time among the great and splendid, in the placid enjoyment of his fame and fortune.

Having owed his fortune to Halifax, he continued always of his patron's party, but, as it seems, without violence or acrimony; and his firmness was naturally esteemed, as his abilities were revered. His security, therefore, was never violated; and when, upon the extrusion of the Whigs, some intercession was used lest Congreve should be displaced, the Earl of Oxford made this answer:

"Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni,
Nec tam aversus equos Tyriâ sol jungit ab urbe."

He that was thus honoured by the adverse party might naturally expect to be advanced when his friends returned to power, and he was accordingly made secretary for the Island of Jamaica; a place, I suppose, without trust or care, but which, with his post in the customs, is said to have afforded him twelve hundred pounds a year.

His honours were yet far greater than his profits. Every writer mentioned him with respect; and, among other testimonies to his merit, Steele made him the patron of his *Miscellany*, and Pope inscribed to him his translation of the *Iliad*.

But he treated the Muses with ingratitude; for, having long conversed familiarly with the great, he wished to be considered rather as a man of fashion than of wit; and when he received a visit from Voltaire, disgusted him by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author, but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him."

In his retirement he may be supposed to have applied himself to books; for he discovers more literature than the poets have commonly attained. But his studies were in his latter days obstructed by cataracts in his eyes, which at last terminated in blindness. This melancholy state was aggravated by the gout, for which he sought relief by a journey to Bath; but being overturned in his chariot, complained from that time of a pain in his side, and died at his house in Surrey Street, in the Strand, Jan. 29, 1728-9. Having lain in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory by Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough, to whom, for reasons either not known or not mentioned, he bequeathed a legacy of about ten thousand pounds, the accumulation of attentive parsimony, which, though to her superfluous and useless, might have given great assistance to the ancient family from which he descended, at that time, by the imprudence of his relation, reduced to difficulties and distress.

Congreve has merit of the highest kind; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot speak distinctly, for since I inspected them many years have passed; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life. He formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers; but that which he endeavoured, he seldom failed of performing. His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion: his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor, playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. His comedies have, therefore, in some degree the operation of tragedies; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination.



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CONGREVE RECEIVES A VISIT FROM VOLTAIRE.

Of his miscellaneous poetry I cannot say any thing very favourable. The powers of Congreve seem to desert him when he leaves the stage ; as Antæus was no longer strong than when he could touch the ground. It cannot be observed without wonder, that a mind so vigorous and fertile in dramatic compositions should on any other occasion discover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in these little pieces neither elevation of fancy, selection of language, nor skill in versification : yet, if I were required to select from the whole mass of English poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in *The Mourning Bride* :

“ ALMERIA.

It was a fancied noise ; for all is hush'd.

LEONORA.

It bore the accent of a human voice.

ALMERIA.

It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling through hollows of this vaulted aisle ;
We'll listen—

LEONORA.

Hark !

ALMERIA.

No, all is hush'd and still as death.—'Tis dreadful !
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,
Looking tranquillity ! it strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight ; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice ;
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.”

He who reads these lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet ; he feels what he remembers to have felt before ; but he feels it with great increase of sensibility ; he recognises a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty.

Yet could the author, who appears here to have enjoyed the confidence of nature, lament the death of Queen Mary in lines like these :

“ The rocks are cleft, and new-descending rills
Furrow the brows of all th' impending hills.
The water-gods to flood their rivulets turn,
And each, with streaming eyes, supplies his wanting urn.
The Fauns forsake the woods, the Nymphs the grove,
And round the plain in sad distractions rove :
In prickly brakes their tender limbs they tear,
And leave on thorns their locks of golden hair.
With their sharp nails themselves the Satyrs wound,
And tug their shaggy beards, and bite with grief the ground.

Lo, Pan himself, beneath a blasted oak,
 Dejected lies, his pipe in pieces broke.
 See Pales weeping too, in wild despair,
 And to the piercing winds her bosom bare.
 And see yon fading myrtle, where appears
 The Queen of Love, all bath'd in flowing tears ;
 See how she wrings her hands, and beats her breast,
 And tears her useless girdle from her waist !
 Hear the sad murmurs of her sighing doves !
 For grief they sigh, forgetful of their loves."*

And, many years after, he gave no proof that time had improved his wisdom or his wit ; for, on the death of the Marquis of Blandford, this was his song :

" And now the winds, which had so long been still,
 Began the swelling air with sighs to fill ;
 The water-nymphs, who motionless remain'd,
 Like images of ice, while she complain'd,
 Now loos'd their streams ; as when descending rains
 Roll the steep torrents headlong o'er the plains.
 The prone creation, who so long had gaz'd,
 Charm'd with her cries, and at her griefs amaz'd,
 Began to roar and howl with horrid yell,
 Dismal to hear, and terrible to tell !
 Nothing but groans and sighs were heard around,
 And Echo multiplied each mournful sound."

In both these funeral poems, when he has " yelled " out many " syllables " of senseless " dolour," he dismisses his reader with senseless consolation : from the grave of Pastora rises a light that forms a star ; and where Amaryllis wept for Amyntas, from every tear sprung up a violet.

But William is his hero, and of William he will sing :

" The hovering winds on downy wings shall wait around,
 And catch, and waft to foreign lands, the flying sound."

It cannot but be proper to show what they shall have to catch and carry :

" 'Twas now, when flowery lawns the prospect made,
 And flowing brooks beneath a forest shade,
 A lowing heifer, loveliest of the herd,
 Stood feeding by ; while two fierce bulls prepar'd
 Their armed heads for fight, by fate of war to prove
 The victor worthy of the fair-one's love ;
 Unthought presage of what met next my view ;
 For soon the shady scene withdrew.
 And now for woods, and fields, and springing flowers,
 Behold a town arise, bulwark'd with walls and lofty towers ;
 Two rival armies all the plain o'erspread,
 Each in battalia rang'd, and shining arms array'd ;
 With eager eyes beholding both from far
 Namur, the prize and mistress of the war."

The Birth of the Muse is a miserable fiction. One good line it has, which was borrowed from Dryden. The concluding verses are these :

" This said, no more remain'd. Th' ethereal host
 Again impatient crowd the crystal coast.

* Elegy on the Death of Queen Mary, 1695.

The father now, within his spacious hands,
 Encompass'd all the mingled mass of seas and lands ;
 And, having heav'd aloft the ponderous sphere,
 He launch'd the air to float in ambient air."

Of his irregular poems, that *To Mrs. Arabella Hunt* seems to be the best : his *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, however, has some lines which Pope had in his mind when he wrote his own.

His imitations of Horace are feebly paraphrastical, and the additions which he makes are of little value. He sometimes retains what were more properly omitted, as when he talks of "vervain" and "gums" to propitiate Venus.

Of his translations, the satire of Juvenal was written very early, and may therefore be forgiven ; though it have not the massiness and vigour of the original. In all his versions, strength and sprightliness are wanting : his *Hymn to Venus*, from Homer, is perhaps the best. His lines are weakened with expletives, and his rhymes are frequently imperfect.

His petty poems are seldom worth the cost of criticism ; sometimes the thoughts are false, and sometimes common. In his verses *On Lady Gethin*, the latter part is in imitation of Dryden's *Ode on Mrs. Killigrew* ; and *Doris*, that has been so lavishly flattered by Steele, has indeed some lively stanzas, but the expression might be mended ; and the most striking part of the character has been already shown in *Love for Love*. His *Art of Pleasing* is founded on a vulgar, but perhaps impracticable principle ; and the staleness of the sense is not concealed by any novelty of illustration or elegance of diction.

This tissue of poetry, from which he seems to have hoped a lasting name, is totally neglected, and known only as it appended to his plays.

While comedy or while tragedy is regarded, his plays are likely to be read ; but, except what relates to the stage,* I know not that he has ever written a stanza that is sung, or a couplet that is quoted. The general character of his *Miscellanies* is, that they show little wit and little virtue.

Yet to him, it must be confessed, that we are indebted for the correction of a national error, and for the cure of our Pindaric madness. He first taught the English writers that Pindar's odes were regular ; and though certainly he had not the fire requisite for the higher species of lyric poetry, he has shown us that enthusiasm has its rules, and that, in mere confusion, there is neither grace nor greatness.

* "Except !" exclaims Warton. "Is not this a high sort of poetry ? Congreve's opera or oratorio of *Semele* was set to music by Handel."



NICHOLAS ROWE.*

(1673.)

Nicholas Rowe was born at Little Beckford, in Bedfordshire, in 1673. The family had long possessed a considerable estate, with a good house, at Lamerton in Devonshire. His ancestor, from whom he descended in a direct line, received the arms borne by his descendants, for his bravery in the Holy War. His father, John Rowe, who was the first that quitted his paternal acres to practise any part and profit, professed the law, and published Benbow's and Dallison's Reports in the reign of James II.; when, in opposition to the notions then diligently propagated of dispensing power, he ventured to remark how low his authors rated the prerogative. He was made a sergeant, and died April 30, 1692. He was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was first sent to a private school at Highgate; and, being afterwards removed to Westminster, was, at twelve years,† chosen one of the king's scholars. His master was Busby, who suffered none of his scholars to let their powers lie useless; and his exercises in

* Johnson.

† He was not elected till 1688.

several languages are said to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have cost him very little labour.

At sixteen he had, in his father's opinion, made advances in learning sufficient to qualify him for the study of law, and was entered a student of the Middle Temple, where for some time he read statutes and reports with proficiency proportionate to the force of his mind, which was already such that he endeavoured to comprehend law, not as a series of precedents, or collection of positive precepts, but as a system of rational government and impartial justice.

When he was nineteen, he was, by the death of his father, left more to his own direction; and probably from that time suffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced *The Ambitious Step-Mother*, which was received with so much favour, that he devoted himself from that time wholly to elegant literature.

His next tragedy (1702) was *Tamerlane*, in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characterise King William, and Lewis XIV. under Bajazet. The virtues of Tamerlane seem to have been arbitrarily assigned him by his poet; for I know not that history gives any other qualities than those which make a conqueror. The fashion, however, of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raise horror and detestation; and whatever good was withheld from him, that it might not be thrown away, was bestowed upon King William.

This was the tragedy which Rowe valued most, and that which probably, by the help of political auxiliaries, excited most applause; but occasional poetry must often content itself with occasional praise. *Tamerlane* has for a long time been acted only once a year, on the night when King William landed. Our quarrel with Lewis has been long over; and it now gratifies neither zeal nor malice to see him painted with aggravated features, like a Saracen upon a sign.

The Fair Penitent, his next production (1703), is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them; for there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable, and so delightful by the language. The story is domestic, and therefore easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or sprightly as occasion requires.*

The character of Lothario seems to have been expanded by Richardson into Lovelace; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, elegance, and courage naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.

The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhausted, and little remains but to talk of what is past. It has been observed, that the title of the play does not sufficiently correspond with the behaviour of Calista, who at last shows no evident signs of repentance, but may be reasonably suspected of feeling pain.

* It appears from Dr. Johnson's collection on *The Fair Penitent*, that he had no knowledge of Massinger.

from detection rather than from guilt, and expresses more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.

His next (1706) was *Ulysses*; which, with the common fate of mythological stories, is now generally neglected. We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes, to expect any pleasure from their revival; to show them, as they have already been shown, is to disgust by repetition; to give them new qualities, or new adventures, is to offend by violating received notions.

The Royal Convert (1708) seems to have a better claim to longevity. The fable is drawn from an obscure and barbarous age, to which fictions are more easily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly seen, they easily take forms from imagination. The scene lies among our ancestors in our own country, and therefore very easily catches attention. Rodogune is a personage truly tragical, of high spirit and violent passions, great with tempestuous dignity, and wicked, with a soul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. The motto seems to tell that this play was not successful.

Rowe does not always remember what his characters require. In *Tamerlane* there is some ridiculous mention of the God of Love; and Rodogune, a savage Saxon, talks of Venus, and the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter.

The play discovers its own date by a prediction of the Union, in imitation of Cranmer's prophetic promises to Henry VIII. The anticipated blessings of union are not very naturally introduced, nor very happily expressed.

He once (1706) tried to change his hand. He ventured on a comedy, and produced *The Biter*; with which, though it was unfavourably treated by the audience, he was himself delighted; for he is said to have sat in the house, laughing with great vehemence whenever he had, in his own opinion, produced a jest. But, finding that he and the public had no sympathy of mirth, he tried at lighter scenes no more.

After the *Royal Convert* (1714) appeared *Jane Shore*, written, as its author professes, in imitation of Shakespeare's style. In what he thought himself an imitator of Shakespeare, it is not easy to conceive. The numbers, the diction, the sentiments, and the conduct, every thing in which imitation can consist, are remote in the utmost degree from the manner of Shakespeare; whose dramas it resembles only as it is an English story, and as some of the persons have their names in history. This play, consisting chiefly of domestic scenes and private distress, lays hold upon the heart. The wife is forgiven, because she repents; and the husband is honoured because he forgives. This, therefore, is one of those pieces which we still welcome on the stage.

His last tragedy (1715) was *Lady Jane Grey*. This subject had been chosen by Mr. Smith, whose papers were put into Rowe's hands such as he describes them in his preface. This play has likewise sunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the stage:

Being by a competent fortune exempted from any necessity of combating his inclination, he never wrote in distress, and therefore does not appear to have ever written in haste. His works were

finished to his own approbation, and bear few marks of negligence or hurry. It is remarkable, that his prologues and epilogues are all his own, though he sometimes supplied others; he afforded help, but did not solicit it.

As his studies necessarily made him acquainted with Shakespeare, and acquaintance produced veneration, he undertook (1709) an edition of his works, from which he neither received much praise, nor seems to have expected it; yet, I believe, those who compare it with former copies will find that he has done more than he promised; and that, without the pomp of notes or boasts of criticism, many passages are happily restored. He prefixed a life of the author, such as tradition, then almost expiring, could supply, and a preface;* which cannot be said to discover much profundity or penetration. He at least contributed to the popularity of his author.

He was willing enough to improve his fortune by other arts than poetry. He was under-secretary for three years when the Duke of Queensbury was secretary of state, and afterwards applied to the Earl of Oxford for some public employment.† Oxford enjoined him to study Spanish; and when, some time afterwards, he came again, and said that he had mastered it, dismissed him with this congratulation: "Then, sir, I envy you the pleasure of reading *Don Quixote* in the original."

This story is sufficiently attested; but why Oxford, who desired to be thought a favourer of literature, should thus insult a man of acknowledged merit; or how Rowe, who was so keen a Whig‡ that he did not willingly converse with those of the opposite party, could ask preferment from Oxford, it is not now possible to discover. Pope, who told the story, did not say on what occasion the advice was given; and, though he owned Rowe's disappointment, doubted whether any injury was intended him, but thought it rather Lord Oxford's odd way.

It is likely that he lived on discontented through the rest of Queen Anne's reign; but the time came at last when he found kinder friends. At the accession of King George he was made poet-laureate; I am afraid by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint, where he was forced to seek shelter by extreme poverty. He was made likewise one of the land-surveyors of the customs of the port of London. The Prince of Wales chose him clerk of his council; and the Lord Chancellor Parker, as soon as he received the seals, appointed him, unasked, secretary of the presentations. Such an accumulation of employments undoubtedly produced a very considerable revenue.

Having already translated some parts of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which had been published in the *Miscellanies*, and doubtless received many praises, he undertook a version of the whole work, which he lived to finish, but not to publish. It seems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood, who prefixed the author's life, in which is contained the following character:

"As to his person, it was graceful and well-made; his face

* Mr. Rowe's Preface, however, is not distinct, as it might be supposed from this passage, from the Life.

† Spence.

‡ Spence.

regular, and of a manly beauty. As his soul was well lodged, so its rational and animal faculties excelled in a high degree. He had a quick and fruitful invention, a deep penetration, and a large compass of thought, with singular dexterity and easiness in making his thoughts to be understood. He was master of most parts of polite learning, especially the classical authors, both Greek and Latin; understood the French, Italian, and Spanish languages; and spoke the first fluently, and the other two tolerably well.

"He had likewise read most of the Greek and Roman histories in their original languages, and most that are wrote in English, French, Italian, and Spanish. He had a good taste in philosophy; and, having a firm impression of religion upon his mind, he took great delight in divinity and ecclesiastical history; in both which he made great advances in the times he retired into the country, which was frequent. He expressed, on all occasions, his full persuasion of the truth of revealed religion; and being a sincere member of the established church himself, he pitied, but condemned not, those that dissented from it. He abhorred the principles of persecuting men upon the account of their opinions in religion; and, being strict in his own, he took it not upon him to censure those of another persuasion. His conversation was pleasant, witty, and learned, without the least tincture of affectation or pedantry; and his inimitable manner of diverting and enlivening the company, made it impossible for any one to be out of humour when he was in it. Envy and detraction seemed to be entirely foreign to his constitution; and whatever provocations he met with at any time, he passed them over without the least thought of resentment or revenge. As Homer had a Zoilus, so Mr. Rowe had sometimes his; for there were not wanting malevolent people, and pretenders to poetry too, that would now and then bark at his best performances; but he was conscious of his own genius, and had so much good nature as to forgive them; nor could he ever be tempted to return them an answer.

"The love of learning and poetry made him not the less fit for business; and nobody applied himself closer to it when it required his attendance. The late Duke of Queensberry, when he was secretary of state, made him his secretary for public affairs; and when that truly great man came to know him well, he was never so pleased as when Mr. Rowe was in his company. After the Duke's death, all avenues were stopped to his preferment; and, during the rest of that reign, he passed his times with the Muses and his books, and sometimes the conversation of his friends.

"When he had just got to be easy in his fortune, and was in a fair way to make it better, death swept him away, and in him deprived the world of one of the best men, as well as one of the best geniuses of the age. He died like a Christian and a philosopher; in charity with all mankind, and with an absolute resignation to the will of God. He kept up his good humour to the last; and took leave of his wife and friends, immediately before his last agony, with the same tranquillity of mind, and the same indifference for life, as though he had been upon taking but a short journey. He was twice married; first to a daughter of Mr. Parsons, one of the auditors of the revenue; and afterwards to a daughter of Mr. Devenish, of a

good family in Dorsetshire. By the first he had a son ; and by the second a daughter, married afterwards to Mr. Fane. He died the 6th of December, 1718, in the forty-fifth year of his age ; and was buried the 19th of the same month in Westminster Abbey, in the aisle where many of our English poets are interred, over against Chaucer, his body being attended by a select number of his friends, and the dean and choir officiating at the funeral."

To this character, which is apparently given with the fondness of a friend, may be added the testimony of Pope, who says, in a letter to Blount, "Mr. Rowe accompanied me, and passed a week in the forest. I need not tell you how much a man of his turn entertained me ; but I must acquaint you, there is a vivacity and gaiety of disposition, almost peculiar to him, which make it impossible to part from him without that uneasiness which generally succeeds all our pleasure."

Pope has left behind him another mention of his companion, less advantageous, which is thus reported by Dr. Warburton :

"Rowe, in Mr. Pope's opinion, maintained a decent character, but had no heart. Mr. Addison was justly offended with some behaviour which arose from that want, and estranged himself from him, which Rowe felt very severely. Mr. Pope, their common friend, knowing this, took an opportunity, at some juncture of Mr. Addison's advancement, to tell him how poor Rowe was grieved at his displeasure, and what satisfaction he expressed at Mr. Addison's good fortune ; which he expressed so naturally, that he (Mr. Pope) could not but think him sincere. Mr. Addison replied, 'I do not suspect that he feigned : but the levity of his heart is such, that he is struck with any new adventure ; and it would affect him just in the same manner, if he heard I was going to be hanged.'—Mr. Pope said he could not deny but Mr. Addison understood Rowe well."

This censure time has not left us the power of confirming or refuting ; but observation daily shows, that much stress is not to be laid on hyperbolical accusations and pointed sentences, which even he that utters them desires to be applauded rather than credited. Addison can hardly be supposed to have meant all that he said. Few characters can bear the microscopic scrutiny of wit quickened by anger ; and perhaps the best advice to authors would be, that they should keep out of the way of one another.

Rowe is chiefly to be considered as a tragic writer and a translator. In his attempt at comedy he failed so ignominiously, that his *Biter* is not inserted in his works ; and his occasional poems and short compositions are rarely worthy of either praise or censure ; for they seem the casual sports of a mind seeking rather to amuse its leisure than to exercise its powers.

In the construction of his dramas there is not much art ; he is not a nice observer of the unities. He extends time and varies place, as his convenience requires. To vary the place is not, in my opinion, any violation of nature, if the change is made between the acts ; for it is no less easy for the spectator to suppose himself at Athens in the second act, than at Thebes in the first ; but to change the scene, as is done by Rowe, in the middle of an act, is to add more acts to the play ; since an act is so much of the business as is transacted without

interruption. Rowe, by this license, easily extricates himself from difficulties; as, in *Jane Grey*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of public execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no sooner has Jane pronounced some prophetic rhymes, than—pass and begone—the scene closes, and Pembroke and Gardiner are turned out upon the stage.

I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep search into nature, any accurate discriminations of kindred qualities, or nice display of passion in its progress; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much interest or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always seen and heard with pity. Alicia is a character of empty noise, with no resemblance to real sorrow or to natural madness.

Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his scenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the sentiments; he seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.

His translation of the *Golden Verses*, and of the first book of Quillet's poem, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verses* are tedious.

The version of *Lucan* is one of the greatest productions of English poetry; for there is perhaps none that so completely exhibits the genius and spirit of the original. *Lucan* is distinguished by a kind of dictatorial or philosophic dignity, rather, as Quintilian observes, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed sentences, comprised in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and successfully preserved. His versification, which is such as his contemporaries practised without any attempt at innovation or improvement, seldom wants either melody or force. His author's sense is sometimes a little diluted by additional infusions, and sometimes weakened by too much expansion. But such faults are to be expected in all translations, from the constraint of measures and dissimilitude of languages. The *Pharsalia* of Rowe deserves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more esteemed.*

ISAAC WATTS.†

(1674.)

Isaac Watts was born July 17th, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the same name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen; though common report makes him a shoemaker. He appears,

* The life of Rowe is a very remarkable instance of the uncommon strength of Dr. Johnson's memory. When I received from him the Ms., he complacently observed, "that the criticism was tolerably well done, considering that he had not seen Rowe's works for thirty years."

† Johnson.

from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorn, a clergyman, master of the free-school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode in his *Horæ Lyricæ*.



ISAAC WATTS.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution of taking his lot with the Dissenters. Such he was as every Christian church would rejoice to have adopted.*

He therefore repaired, in 1690, to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Horte, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, show a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his *Miscellanies*, a maker of verses from

* "In his latter days he changed his sentiments concerning the Trinity. It is said of Johnson, I know not on what authority, that when a lady, in dispute with him on the subject, observed that Dr. Watts opened his eyes when he died: 'Did he, madam?' he answered; 'then the first thing he saw was the devil.' The reply is to be imputed more to the doctor's wit than to his intolerance."—SOUTHBY.

fifteen to fifty; and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the glyconic measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindaric folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour, as shows that he was but a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them; and by interleaving them, to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature, and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartopp five years, as domestic tutor to his son; and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures: and being chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the first time on the birthday that completed his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of a second nativity, by which he entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncey; but soon after his entrance on his charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price (1703). His health then returned gradually; and he performed his duty till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that from the feebleness which it brought upon him he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons's representation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.

"Our next observation shall be made upon that remarkably kind providence which brought the doctor into Sir Thomas Abney's family, and continued him there till his death, a period of no less than thirty-six years. In the midst of his sacred labours for the glory of God and good of his generation, he is seized with a most violent and threatening fever, which leaves him oppressed with great weakness, and puts a stop at least to his public services for four years. In this distressing season, doubly so to his active and pious spirit, he is invited to

Sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever removes from it till he had finished his days. Here he enjoyed the uninterrupted demonstrations of the truest friendship. Here, without any care of his own, he had every thing which could contribute to the enjoyment of life, and favour the unwearied pursuits of his studies. Here he dwelt in a family which, for piety, order, harmony, and every virtue, was a house of God. Here he had the privilege of a country recess, the fragrant bower, the spreading lawn, the flowery garden, and other advantages, to soothe his mind and aid his restoration to health; to yield him, whenever he choose them, most grateful intervals from his laborious studies, and enable him to return to them with redoubled vigour and delight. Had it not been for this most happy event, he might, as to outward view, have feebly, it may be painfully, dragged on through many more years of languor and inability for public service, and even for profitable study; or perhaps might have sunk into his grave, under the overwhelming load of infirmities, in the midst of his days; and thus the church and world would have been deprived of those many excellent sermons and works which he drew up and published during his long residence in this family. In a few years after his coming hither, Sir Thomas Abney dies; but his amiable consort survives, who shows the doctor the same respect and friendship as before, and most happily for him and great numbers besides: for as her riches were great, her generosity and munificence were in full proportion; her thread of life was drawn out to a great age, even beyond that of the doctor's; and thus this excellent man, through her kindness and that of her daughter, the present Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, who in a like degree esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits and felicities he experienced at his first entrance into this family, till his days were numbered and finished, and, like a shock of corn in its season, he ascended into the regions of perfect and immortal life and joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six-and-thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number and their variety show the intenseness of his industry and the extent of his capacity.

He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style. He showed them that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation; and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told me that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his cursory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper impression.

To stated and public instruction he added familiar visits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of resentment; but by his established and habitual practice he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tenderness appeared in his attention to children and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue, though the whole was not a hundred a year; and for children he condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion and systems of instruction adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire his meekness of opposition and his mildness of censure. It was not only in his book, but in his mind, that orthodoxy was united with charity.

Of his philosophical pieces, his *Logic* has been received into the Universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation. If he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system pretends to be its author.

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of space with that of empty space; and did not consider that though space might be without matter, yet matter, being extended, could not be without space.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*; but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatises of theology as distinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to theology. As

piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works. Under his direction, it may be truly said, *theologia philosophia ancillatur*—philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction. It is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction ; and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray.

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unsolicited diploma, by which he became a doctor of divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgment.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example, till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions ; and being no longer capable of public duty, he offered to remit the salary appendent to it, but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed, where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired, Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke ; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined ; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars.

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments rather than from any single performance : for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity ; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated :* for his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment ; his imagination, as the *Dacian Battle* proves, was vigorous and active ; and the stores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to be supplied. His ear was well tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious ; but his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition ; and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a man of letters ; and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

* "Watts was included in the first edition of the *Dunciad*, for his version of the Psalms. As Pope professed to satirise none but those who attacked him, Watts observed to Richardson the painter that he had given no provocation, and his name was accordingly omitted."—SOUTHEY.

He writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of sprightliness and vigour? He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed, by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in all but his nonconformity, to copy his benevolence to man and his reverence to God.*

* "Some absurdities and many beauties might be collected from his poems. He has the rare merit of being seldom dull; and, except where he has purposely stooped to the capacity of children for the best and most praiseworthy motives, he usually displays a skilful ear and an active fancy, a mind well stored with knowledge, and a heart full of piety and goodness."—SOUTHEY.



JOHN PHILIPS.*

(1676-1708.)

John Philips was born Dec. 30, 1676, at Bampton, in Oxfordshire; of which place his father, Dr. Stephen Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestic; after which he was sent to Winchester, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewell, his biographer, he was soon distinguished by the superiority of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be credited, so much endeared himself to his schoolfellows by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur and ill-will, saw him indulged by the master with particular immunities. It is related that when he was at school he seldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber, where his sovereign pleasure was to sit hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody whose service he found means to procure.†

At school he became acquainted with the poets, ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himself at Christchurch; a college at that time in the highest reputation, by the transmission of Busby's scholars to the care first of Fell, and afterwards of Aldrich. Here he was distinguished as a genius eminent among the emiaent, and for friendship particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra* and *Hippolytus*. The profession which he intended to follow was that of physic; and he took much delight in natural history, of which botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confined to his friends and to the University, till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which struck the public attention with a mode of writing new and unexpected.

This performance raised him so high, that when Europe resounded with the victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult opposition to Addison, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is said that he would willingly have declined the task, but that his friends urged it upon him. It appears that he wrote this poem at the house of Mr. St. John.

Blenheim was published in 1705. The next year produced his great work, the poem upon *Cider*, in two books, which was received

* Johnson.

† Isaac Vossius relates that he also delighted in having his hair combed, when he could have it done by barbers or other persons skilled in the rules of prosody. Of one of the passages that contains this ridiculous fancy, the following is a translation: "Many people take delight in the rubbing of their limbs and the combing of their hair; but these exercises would delight much more, if the servants at the baths and of the barbers were so skilful in this art, that they could express any measures with their fingers. I remember that more than once I have fallen into the hands of men of this sort, who could imitate any measure of songs in combing the hair; so as sometimes to express very intelligibly iambs, trochees, dactyles, &c., from whence there arose to me no small delight."—See his *Treatise de Poematum cantu et viribus Rhythmi*, Oxon. 1673, p. 62.

- with loud praises, and continued long to be read, as an imitation of Virgil's Georgics, which needed not shun the presence of the original.

He then grew probably more confident of his own abilities, and began to meditate a poem on the *Last Day*, a subject on which no mind can hope to equal expectation.

This work he did not live to finish : his diseases, a slow consumption and an asthma, put a stop to his studies ; and on Feb. 16, 1708, at the beginning of his thirty-third year, put an end to his life.

He was buried in the cathedral of Hereford ; and Sir Simon Harcourt, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a monument in Westminster Abbey. The inscription at Westminster was written, as I have heard, by Dr. Atterbury, though commonly given to Dr. Freind.

His epitaph at Hereford :

JOHANNES PHILIPS.

Obiit 15 die Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708.
 { Ætat. sue 32.

Cujus

Ossa si requiras, hanc Urnam inspice ;
Si Ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule :

Si Tumulum desideras,
Templum adi Westmonasteriense :

Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa et præclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat,

Inscriptio.

Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius et officiosus,
Testetur hoc saxum

A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoræ non sine Lacrymis dictum.

His epitaph at Westminster :

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,
Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama,
JOHANNIS PHILIPS :

Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
Immortale suum Ingenium,
Eruditione multiplici excultum,

Miro animi candore,
Eximiâ morum simplicitate,
Honestavit.

Litterarum Amœniorum sitim,
Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,
Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,
In illo Musarum Domicilio

Præclaris Æmulatorum studiis excitatus,
Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,
Carmina sermone Patrio composuit
A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,
Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,

Versuum quippe Harmoniam
Rythmo didicerat.
Antiquo illo, libero, multiformi
Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, et attemperato,
Non numeris in eundem sævè orbem redeuntibus,

Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono
 Metiri :
 Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono secundus,
 Primoque pœne par.
 es seu Tenues, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres
 Ornandas sumserat,
 Nusquam, non quod decuit,
 Et videt, et assecutus est,
 Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
 Fandi author, et Modorum artifex,
 Fas sit Huic,
 Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere,
 O Pœsis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
 Alterum tibi latus claudere,
 Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium
 Non dedecerebunt Chorum.
 SIMON HARCOURT, Miles,
 Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti
 Quoad viveret Fautor,
 Post Obitum piè memor,
 Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.
 J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archidiaconi
 Salop. Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ
 In agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.
 Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious ; who bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and tedious and painful maladies without impatience ; beloved by those that knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His conversation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which seems to have flowed only among his intimates ; for I have been told that he was in company silent and barren, and employed only upon the pleasure of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he has found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of those who please by not offending, and whose person was loved because his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had disgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Cantos*. To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration : the words and things are presented with a new appearance ; and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of such performances begins and ends with the first author. He that should again adapt Milton's phrase to the gross incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, must yet expect but a small part of the praise which Philips has obtained ; he can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

"The parody on Milton," says Gildon, "is the only tolerable

production of its author." This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow it supreme excellence. It is, indeed, the poem of a scholar, all inexpert of war; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroic ages or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the composition of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes Marlborough behold at a distance the slaughter made by Tallard, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He imitates Milton's numbers, indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work: but Philips sits down with a resolution to make no more music than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had. Those asperities, therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradise Lost* are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits several artful accommodations of classic expressions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the ode of Hannes.*

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the Georgics, may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is, therefore, at once a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem.

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees with sentiments more generally alluring, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse; and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be

* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the last. They all read—

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus insidet."

The author probably wrote—

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus insidet."—Dr. J.

sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures and the embellishment of rhyme must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the "redstreak" and "pearmain."

What study could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficiency cannot be supplied. He seems not born to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that "it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius."

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been transcribed from the Bodleian manuscripts:

"A Prefatory Discourse to the Poem on Mr. Philips, with a Character of his Writings.

"It is altogether as equitable some account should be given of those who have distinguished themselves by their writings, as of those who are renowned for great actions. It is but reasonable they who contribute so much to the immortality of others should have some share in it themselves; and since their genius only is discovered by their works, it is just that their virtues should be recorded by their friends. For no modest men (as the person I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyrics; and it is very hard that they should go without reputation, only because they the more deserve it. The end of writing lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the Duke of Marlborough; we must be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and social virtues are more easily transcribed. The life of Cowley is more instructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wished, since Mr. Philips had so many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had some of the abilities of his historian.

The Grecian philosophers have had their lives written, their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very just to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe must be acquainted with his accomplishments. They give praise and expect it in their turns; they commend their Patrus and Molières as well as their Condés and Turennes; their Pellisons and Racines have their eulogies as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praises of the learned.

I am satisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him,—had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius,—he had been an example to their poets, and a subject of their panegyrics; and perhaps set in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to submit.

I shall therefore endeavour to do justice to his memory, since nobody else undertakes it. And, indeed, I can assign no cause why so many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myself to give an account of him) should forbear to celebrate the memory of one so dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work entirely belonging to me.

I shall content myself with giving only a character of the person and his writings, without meddling with the transactions of his life, which was altogether private: I shall only make this known observation of his family, that there was scarcely so many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of whom three are still living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius; so that their fruitful mother, like the mother of the gods, seems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modesty, nor the humour of the present age, permits me to speak; of the dead I may say something.

One of them had made the greatest progress in the study of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly mastered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorf. He could refute Hobbes with as much solidity as some of greater name, and expose him with as much wit as Echard. That noble study, which requires the greatest reach of reason and nicety of distinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loss to be deprived of one who understood a science so necessary, and yet so unknown in England. I shall add only, he had the same honesty and sincerity as the person I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert; one employed his reason more, the other his imagination; the former had been well qualified for those posts which the modesty of the latter made him refuse. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, composed several very agreeable pieces. In all probability, he would have written as finely as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been so fit to describe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and, while his brother was writing upon the greatest men that any age ever produced, in a style equal to them, he might have served as a panegyrist on him.

This is all I think necessary to say of his family. I shall proceed to himself and his writings, which I shall first treat of, because I know they are censured by some out of envy, and by more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the least considerable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the rest. The style agreed so well with the burlesque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing else. Every body is pleased with that work. But to judge rightly of the other requires a perfect mastery of poetry and criticism, a just contempt of the little turns

and witticisms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect understanding of poetical diction and description.

All that have any taste for poetry will agree, that the great burlesque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much easier to make a great thing appear little than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master's hand.

It must still be more acceptable than the low burlesque, because the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itself unknown to all men of good breeding. The style of Billingsgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James's. A gentleman would take but little pleasure in language which he would think it hard to be accosted in, or in reading words which he could not pronounce without blushing. The lofty burlesque is the more to be admired, because, to write it, the author must be master of two of the most different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expose what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raise and elevate. We must read Virgil and Milton for the one, and Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave style, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and laughter are of such opposite natures, that they are seldom created by the same person. The man of mirth is always observing the follies and weaknesses, the serious writer the virtues or crimes, of mankind; one is pleased with contemplating a beau, the other a hero; even from the same object they would draw different ideas. Achilles would appear in very different lights to Thersites and Alexander: the one would admire the courage and greatness of his soul; the other would ridicule the vanity and rashness of his temper. As the satirist says to Hannibal,

"I, curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, et declamatio fias."

The contrariety of style to the subject pleases the more strongly because it is more surprising: the expectation of the reader is pleasantly deceived, who expects a humble style from the subject, or a great subject from the style. It pleases the more universally, because it is agreeable to the taste both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly so to those who have a relish of the best writers, and the noblest sort of poetry. I shall produce only one passage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaskins:

"My galligaskins, which have long withstood
The winter's fury and encroaching frosts,
By time subdued (what will not time subdue!)"

This is admirably pathetic, and shows very well the vicissitudes of sublunary things. The rest goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetic and terrible complaint. Is it not surprising that the subject should be so mean, and the verse so pompous, that the least things in his poetry,

as in a microscope, should grow great and formidable to the eye ; especially considering that, not understanding French, he had no model for his style ! that he should have no writer to imitate, and himself be inimitable ! that he should do all this before he was twenty ; at an age which is usually pleased with a glare of false thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fustian ; at an age at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almost said Virgil, were inconsiderable ! so soon was his imagination at its full strength, his judgment ripe, and his humour complete.

This poem was written for his own diversion, without any design of publication. It was communicated but to me ; but soon spread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge, and impudently said to be corrected by the author. This grievance is now grown more epidemical ; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts, or a title to his own writings. Xenophon answered the Persian who demanded his arms, ' We have nothing now left but our arms and our valour : if we surrender the one, how shall we make use of the other ? ' Poets have nothing but their wits and their writings ; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don't see what good the former can do them. To pirate and publicly own it, to prefix their names to the works they steal, to own and avow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of but in England. It will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the most wise, most learned, and most generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanic should be better secured than that of a scholar ! that the poorest manual operations should be more valued than the noblest products of the brain ! that it should be felony to rob a cobbler of a pair of shoes, and no crime to deprive the best author of his whole subsistence ! that nothing should make a man a sure title to his own writings but the stupidity of them ! that the works of Dryden should meet with less encouragement than those of his own Flecknoe, or Blackmore ! that Tillotson and St. George, Tom Thumb and Temple, should be set on an equal foot ! This is the reason why this very paper has been so long delayed ; and while the most impudent and scandalous libels are publicly vended by the pirates, this innocent work is forced to steal abroad as if it were a libel.

Our present writers are by these wretches reduced to the same condition Virgil was when the centurion seized on his estate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Mæcenas of the present age that will retrieve them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr. Philips ; it helped him to a reputation which he neither desired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himself capable : but the event showed his modesty. And it was reasonable to hope, that he who could raise mean subjects so high, should still be more elevated on greater themes ; that he that could draw such noble ideas from a shilling, could not fail upon such a subject as the Duke of Marlborough, which is capable of heightening even the most low and trifling genius. And, indeed, most of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing less to the poet than the patron. Men of the greatest

genius are sometimes lazy, and want a spur ; often modest, and dare not venture into public : they certainly know their faults in the worst things ; and even their best things they are not fond of, because the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil desired his works might be burnt, had not the same Augustus that desired him to write them preserved them from destruction. A scribbling beau may imagine a poet may be induced to write by the very pleasure he finds in writing ; but that is seldom when people are necessitated to it. I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty critic, who could have as little understood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

False critics have been the plague of all ages. Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheelbarrow : he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's case.

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occasion of their dislike. People that have formed their taste upon the French writers can have no relish for Philips ; they admire points and turns, and consequently have no judgment of what is great and majestic : he must look little in their eyes, when he soars so high as to be almost out of their view. I cannot, therefore, allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of *Blenheim*, nor any who takes Bouhours for a complete critic. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients ; he takes those passages of their own authors to be really sublime which come the nearest to it ; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and a fine one, and has more instances of the sublime out of Ovid *de Tristibus* than he has out of all Virgil.

I shall allow, therefore, only those to be judges of Philips who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their standard.

But, before I enter on this subject, I shall consider what is particular in the style of Philips, and examine what ought to be the style of heroic poetry ; and next inquire how far he is come up to that style.

His style is particular, because he lays aside rhyme and writes in blank verse, and uses old words, and frequently postpones the adjective to the substantive, and the substantive to the verb ; and leaves out little particles, *a* and *the*, *her* and *his* ; and uses frequent appositions. Now let us examine whether these alterations of style be conformable to the true sublime."

JOHN HUGHES.*

(1677-1720.)

John Hughes, the son of a citizen in London, and of Ann Burgess, of an ancient family in Wiltshire, was born at Marlborough, Jan. 29, 1677. He was educated at a private school; and though his advances in literature are, in the *Biographia*, very ostentatiously displayed, the name of his master is somewhat ungratefully concealed.†

At nineteen he drew the plan of a tragedy,‡ and paraphrased, rather too profusely, the ode of Horace which begins "Integer vitæ." To poetry he added the science of music, in which he seems to have attained considerable skill, together with the practice of design, or rudiments of painting.

His studies did not withdraw him wholly from business, nor did business hinder him from study. He had a place in the office of ordnance, and was secretary to several commissions for purchasing lands necessary to secure the royal docks at Chatham and Portsmouth; yet found time to acquaint himself with modern languages.

In 1697 he published a poem on the *Peace of Ryswick*; and in 1699 another piece, called the *Court of Neptune*, on the return of King William, which he addressed to Mr. Montague, the general patron of the followers of the Muses. The same year he produced a song on the Duke of Gloucester's birth-day.

He did not confine himself to poetry, but cultivated other kinds of writing with great success; and about this time showed his knowledge of human nature by an *Essay on the Pleasure of being Deceived*. In 1702 he published, on the death of King William, a Pindaric ode, called the *House of Nassau*;§ and wrote another paraphrase on the *Otium divos* of Horace.

In 1703 his ode on *Music* was performed at Stationers' Hall; and he wrote afterwards six cantatas, which were set to music by the greatest master of that time, and seemed intended to oppose or exclude the Italian opera,—an exotic and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and always has prevailed.

His reputation was now so far advanced, that the public began to pay reverence to his name; and he was solicited to prefix a preface to the translation of Boccacini, a writer whose satirical vein cost him his life in Italy, and who never, I believe, found many readers in this country, even though introduced by such powerful recommendation.

* Johnson.

† He was educated in a dissenting academy, of which the Rev. Mr. Thomas Rowe was tutor; and was a fellow-student there with Dr. Isaac Watts, Mr. Samuel Say, and other persons of eminence. In the *Horæ Lyricæ* of Dr. Watts is a poem to the memory of Mr. Rowe.

‡ A tragedy entitled *Amalasont, Queen of the Goths*.

§ "In Pindaric and lyric poetry," says Mr. Duncomb, "our author's genius shines in its full lustre. Though he enjoyed all that fire of imagination and divine enthusiasm for which some of the ancient poets are so deservedly admired, yet did his fancy never run away with his reason, but was always guided by superior judgment; and the music of his verse is exquisite."

He translated Fontenelle's *Dialogues of the Dead*; and his version was perhaps read at that time, but is now neglected; for by a book not necessary, and owing its reputation wholly to its turn of diction, little notice can be gained but from those who can enjoy the graces of the original. To the dialogues of Fontenelle he added two composed by himself; and, though not only an honest but a pious man, dedicated his work to the Earl of Wharton. He judged skilfully enough of his own interest; for Wharton, when he went lord-lieutenant to Ireland, offered to take Hughes with him and establish him; but Hughes, having hopes or promises from another man in power of some provision more suitable to his inclination, declined Wharton's offer, and obtained nothing from the other.

He translated *The Misanthrope* of Molière, which he never offered to the stage; and occasionally amused himself with making versions of favourite scenes in other plays.

Being now received as a wit among the wits, he paid his contributions to literary undertakings, and assisted both the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. In 1712 he translated Vertot's *History of the Revolution of Portugal*; produced an *Ode to the Creator of the World*,* from the *Fragments of Orpheus*; and brought upon the stage an opera called *Calypso and Telemachus*, intended to show that the English language might be very happily adapted to music. This was impudently opposed by those who were employed in the Italian opera; and, what cannot be told without indignation, the intruders had such interest with the Duke of Shrewsbury, then lord chamberlain, who had married an Italian, as to obtain an obstruction of the profits, though not an inhibition of the performance.

There was at this time a project formed by Tonson for a translation of the *Pharsalia* by several hands; and Hughes englished the tenth book. But this design, as must often happen when the concurrence of many is necessary, fell to the ground; and the whole work was afterwards performed by Rowe.

His acquaintance with the great writers of his time appears to have been very general; but of his intimacy with Addison there is a remarkable proof. It is told on good authority that *Cato* was finished and played by his persuasion. It had long wanted the last act, which he was desired by Addison to supply. If the request was sincere, it proceeded from an opinion, whatever it was, that did not last long; for, when Hughes came in a week to show him his first attempt, he found half an act written by Addison himself.

He afterwards published the works of Spenser, with his life, a glossary, and a discourse on allegorical poetry; a work for which he was well qualified as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary's knowledge of the obsolete words. He did not much revive the curiosity of the public; for near thirty years elapsed before his edition was reprinted. The same year produced his *Apollo and Daphne*, of which the success was very earnestly promoted by

* "The *Ode to the Creator of the World*," says Shiels, "was printed in the year 1713, at the particular instance of Mr. Addison; and is mentioned with applause in the *Spectator*. This, and the *Ecstasy* (published since the death of the author), are justly esteemed two of the noblest odes in our language."

Steele, who, when the rage of party did not misguide him, seems to have been a man of boundless benevolence.

Hughes had hitherto suffered the mortifications of a narrow fortune; but in 1717 the Lord Chancellor Cowper set him at ease, by making him secretary to the commissions of the peace; in which he afterwards, by a particular request, desired his successor Lord Parker to continue him. He had now affluence; but such is human life, that he had it when his declining health could neither allow him long possession nor quick enjoyment.

His last work was his tragedy, *The Siege of Damascus*, after which "a Siege" became a popular title. This play, which still continues on the stage, and of which it is unnecessary to add a private voice to such continuance of approbation, is not acted or printed according to the author's original draught, or his settled intention. He had made Phocyas apostatise from his religion; after which the abhorrence of Eudocia would have been reasonable, his misery would have been just, and the horrors of his repentance exemplary. The players, however, required that the guilt of Phocyas should terminate in desertion to the enemy; and Hughes, unwilling that his relations should lose the benefit of his work, complied with the alteration.

He was now weak with a lingering consumption, and not able to attend the rehearsal; yet was so vigorous in his faculties, that only ten days before his death he wrote the dedication to his patron, Lord Cowper. On February 17, 1719-20, the play was represented and the author died. He lived to hear that it was well received; but paid no regard to the intelligence, being then wholly employed in the meditations of a departing Christian.

A man of his character was undoubtedly regretted; and Steele devoted an essay, in a paper called *The Theatre*, to the memory of his virtues. His life is written in the *Biographia* with some degree of favourable partiality; and an account of him is prefixed to his works by his relation the late Mr. Duncombe, a man whose blameless elegance deserved the same respect.

The character of his genius I shall transcribe from the correspondence of Swift and Pope.

"A month ago," says Swift, "were sent me over, by a friend of mine, the works of John Hughes, Esq. They are in prose and verse. I never heard of the man in my life, yet I find your name as a subscriber. He is too grave a poet for me; and I think among the *mediocrities* in prose as well as verse."

To this Pope returns: "To answer your question as to Mr. Hughes, what he wanted in genius he made up as an honest man; but he was of the class you think him."*

In Spence's collection, Pope is made to speak of him with still less respect, as having no claim to poetical reputation but from his tragedy.

* "This," says Warton, "is a very unjust censure. Can the author of such a tragedy as the *Siege of Damascus* be one of the *mediocrities*? Swift and Pope seem not to recollect the value and rank of an author who could write such a tragedy."



THOMAS PARNELL.*

(1679-1718.)

The life of Dr. Parnell is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith, a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.

What such an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his larger narrative; and have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of Goldsmith.

Tò γὰρ γέρας ἔστι θανάτων.

Thomas Parnell was the son of a commonwealthsman of the same name, who at the Restoration left Congleton, in Cheshire, where the family had been established for several centuries, and, settling in Ireland, purchased an estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and, after the usual education at a grammar-school, was, at the age of thirteen,

* Johnson.

admitted into the college, where, in 1700, he became master of arts, and was the same year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the Bishop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705, Dr. Ashe, the Bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the arch-deaconry of Clogher. About the same year he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two sons, who died young, and a daughter, who long survived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of Queen Anne's reign, Parnell was persuaded to change his party, not without much censure from those whom he forsook; and was received by the new ministry as a valuable reinforcement. When the Earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the crowd in the outer room, he went by the persuasion of Swift, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to inquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it seems often to have happened in those times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which, however, was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was desirous to make himself conspicuous, and to show how worthy he was of high preferment. As he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed his elocution with great success in the pulpits of London; but the queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence; and Pope represents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle, is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, the untimely death of a darling son; or, as others tell, the loss of his wife, who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his personal interest with his private friends; and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to Archbishop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage of Finglass in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from such a man inclines me to believe that the vice of which he has been accused was not gross or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause, was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year; for in July 1718, in his thirty-ninth year, he died at Chester, on his way to Ireland.

He seems to have been one of those poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably published more than he owned. He left many compositions behind him, of which Pope selected those which he thought best, and dedicated them to the Earl of Oxford. Of these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe to contradict. He bestows just praise upon *The Rise of Women*, *The Fairy Tale*, and *The Per-vigilium Veneris*; but has very properly remarked, that in *The Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in English their original effect.

He tells us, that *The Book-Worm* is borrowed from Beza; but he should have added with modern applications: and, when he discovers that *Gay Bacchus* is translated from Augurellus, he ought to have remarked that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he says, taken from the French. I would add, that the description of barrenness, in his verses to Pope, was borrowed from Secundus; but lately searching for the passage, which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to Gray's *Churchyard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage of dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment. He observes, that the story of the *Hermit* is in More's dialogues and Howell's letters, and supposes it to have been originally Arabian.

Goldsmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meanest; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happiest of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I suspect to have been borrowed from Cleveland.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction: in his verses there is more happiness than pains; he is sprightly without effort, and always delights, though he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing. Of his other compositions, it is impossible to say whether they are the productions of nature, so excellent as not to want the help of art, or of art so refined as to resemble nature.

This criticism relates only to the pieces published by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in the last edition, I can only say that I know not whence they came, nor have ever inquired whether they are going. They stand upon the faith of the compilers.

WILLIAM HAMILTON.

(Circa 1680-1751.)

William Hamilton, of Gilbertfield, was the son of Hamilton of Lady Lands. At an early period of life he embraced the profession of a soldier; but a lieutenancy seems to have been the highest preferment which he obtained. During his latter years he resided at Letterick, in the county of Lanark, where he died in 1751, at a very advanced age. He was a contributor to Watson's *Choice Collection of Scots Poems*, and one of the poetical correspondents of Allan Ramsay; three of his epistles occurring in the common editions of Ramsay's works. He published a modernised abridgment of Henry the Minstrel's *Wallace* (1722), an injudicious and futile work; but we have

Ramsay's decided testimony in favour of his Scottish poetry. His *Elegy on the Death of his Dog* is also celebrated by John Wilson, a more recent poet.

WILLIAM BROOME.*

(Circa 1680-1745.)

William Broome was born in Cheshire, as is said, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's College; being by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannuated, he was sent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his college he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifier, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him Poet. When he had opportunities of mangling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastic rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the *Iliads* into prose, in conjunction with Ozell and Oldisworth. How their several parts were distributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozell boasted as superior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the critics.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting Sir John Cotton, at Madingley, near Cambridge; and gained so much of his esteem, that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the *Iliad*; and in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called *Pope's Miscellanies*, many of his early pieces were inserted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the *Iliad* gave encouragement to a version of the *Odyssey*, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burden of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's, was always

* Johnson.

known; he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and at the end of the work some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which, however, mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth, by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity, after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to inquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note "a lie;" but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know not but by hearsay; Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope in the notes to the *Dunciad*.

It is evident that, according to Pope's own estimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at least to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured; and there was for some time more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money; and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only named him disrespectfully in the *Dunciad*, but quoted him more than once in the *Bathos*, as a proficient in the "art of sinking;" and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among "the parrots who repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tone as makes them seem their own." I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a *Miscellany of Poems*, which is inserted, with corrections, in the late compilation.

He never rose to a very high dignity in the church. He was some time rector of Sturston, in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the king visited Cambridge (1728), became Doctor of Laws. He was (in August 1721) presented by the Crown to the rectory of Pulham, in Norfolk, which he held with Oakley Magna, in Suffolk, given him by the Lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, who added the vicarage of Eye, in Suffolk; he then resigned Pulham, and retained the other two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused himself with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the name of Chester.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was a great poet, it would be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifier; his lines are smooth and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant.

His rhymes are sometimes unsuitable; in his *Melancholy*, he makes *breath* rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Those faults occur but seldom; and he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation; but, in his original works, recollection seems to have been his business more than invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is a part of his reader's employment to recall the verses of some former poet. Sometimes he copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton,

"Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
And make affliction objects of a smile,"

brought to my mind some lines on the death of Queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I should not have expected to find an imitator;

"But thou, O Muse! whose sweet Nepenthean tongue
Can charm the pangs of death with deathless song,
Canst sting plagues with easy thoughts beguile,
Make pains and tortures objects of a smile."

To detect his imitations were tedious and useless. What he takes he seldom makes worse; and he cannot justly be thought a mean man, whom Pope chose for an associate, and whose co-operation was considered by Pope's enemies as so important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous distich:

"Pope came off clean with Flower; but they say
Broome went before, and kindly swept the way."

LAWRENCE EUSDEN.

(Circa 1680-1730.)

Lawrence Eusden was born of a good family in Ireland, and received his education at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was honoured with the encouragement of the Earl of Halifax and the patronage of the Duke of Newcastle, who, as lord chamberlain, preferred him to the laureateship, in consideration of an Epithalamium he wrote on the marriage of his grace with Henrietta Godolphin. This laureate's other compositions in rhyme are not worth the enumeration.

SIR JOHN HOPE BRUCE.

(Born circa 1680.)

Sir John Hope Bruce, of Kinross, is the author of the admirable ballad of *Hardyknute*, which was published at Edinburgh in the year

1719, as the production of some early poet, but has long since been admitted to be a modern composition. Sir John, indeed, purported to have been merely the discoverer, "in a vault at Dunfermline," of the manuscript poem, which, in a letter to Lord Benning, he described as "written on vellum in a fair gothic character, but so much defaced by time, as you'll find that the tenth part is not legible." Chalmers, indeed, in his life of Allan Ramsay, ascribes the poem to Lady Wardlaw, Sir John's sister-in-law, and cites the authority of several of the lady's relations and friends in corroboration of her claim; but Mr. Pinkerton considers that "Sir John Bruce, forgetting his letter to Lord Bruce, used Lady Wardlaw as the midwife of his poetry, and furnished her with the stanza or two she afterwards produced, as he did not wish his name used in the story of the vault." Sir John Bruce also wrote the second part of *Hardyknute*, published by Pinkerton among his Select Scottish Ballads.

EDWARD YOUNG.*

(1681-1735.)

The following life was written, at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the public will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him.†

"Dear Sir,—In consequence of our different conversations about authentic materials for the life of Young, I send you the following detail.

Of great men something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the illustrious author of the *Night Thoughts* much has been told of what there never could have been proofs, and little care appears to have been taken to tell that, of which proofs with little trouble might have been procured.

Edward Young was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June 1681: he was the son of Edward Young, at that time fellow of Winchester College and rector of Upham, who was the son of Joseph Young, of Woodhay, in Berkshire, styled by Wood *gentleman*. In September 1682 the poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by Bishop Ward. When Ward's faculties were impaired through age, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that at a visitation of Sprat's, July 12, 1686, the prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the bishop was so pleased, that he told the chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worst prebends in their church. Some time after this, in consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of Lord Brad-

* Johnson.

† See Gentleman's Magazine, lxx. p. 225.

ford, to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons, he was appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says, "he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late queen, who honoured him by standing godmother to the poet." His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of a gentleman of the name of Harris, who married his only daughter. The dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the sixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his decease Bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his sermon with saying, "Death has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us, and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroke; so that he whom you saw a week ago distributing the holy mysteries is now laid in the dust. But he still lives in the many excellent directions he has left us, both how to live and how to die."

The dean placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to discover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford offered them an opportunity to bestow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham, certain it is that to an Oxford fellowship our poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New College cannot claim the honour of numbering among its fellows him who wrote the *Night Thoughts*.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an independent member of New College, that he might live at little expense in the warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father's, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All Souls. In a few months the warden of New College died. He then removed to Corpus College. The president of this society, from regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expenses. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All Souls by Archbishop Tenison, into whose hands it came by devolution. Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the son. The manner in which it was exerted seems to prove that the father did not leave behind much wealth.

On the 23d of April, 1714, Young took his degree of bachelor of civil laws, and his doctor's degree on the 10th of June, 1719.

Soon after he went to Oxford, he discovered, it is said, an inclination for pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boasted to have received his academical instruction from the author of the *Night Thoughts*.

It is probable that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington Library was laid, two years after he had taken his bachelor's degree, Young was appointed to speak the Latin oration. This is at least particular for being dedicated in English "To the Ladies of the Codrington Family." To these ladies he says, "that he was un-

avoidably flung into a singularity by being obliged to write an epistle dedicatory void of commonplace, and such a one as was never published before by any author whatever; that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them; and that the bookseller approved of it because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right."

Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll, if we may credit Curll, dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he says that he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, "I have not the 'Epistle to Lord Lansdowne.' If you will take my advice, I would have you omit that, and the oration on Codrington. I think the collection will sell better without them."

There are who relate that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All Souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became.

The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased some time before by his death; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronised by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young perhaps the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronised only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet Pope is said by Ruffhead to have told Wharton that "Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him pass a foolish youth, the sport of peers and poets; but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency and afterwards with honour."

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life may perhaps be wrong, but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used to spend much of his time at All Souls. "The other boys," said the atheist, "I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read a hundred times; but that fellow Young is continually pestering me with something of his own."^{*}

After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcilable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony of experience against vice.

We shall soon see that one of his earliest productions was more serious than what comes from the generality of unfledged poets.

Young, perhaps, ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the

^{*} As my great friend is now become the subject of biography, it should be told that, every time I called upon Johnson during the time I was employed in collecting materials for this life and putting it together, he never suffered me to depart without some such farewell as this: "Don't forget that rascal Tindal, sir. Be sure to hang up the atheist." Alluding to this anecdote which Johnson had mentioned to me.

Poem to his Majesty, presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honour on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added in one day ten others to the number of peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at least of the new lords, he published, in 1712, *An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne*. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyric with the extravagance of a young man who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the public to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by showing that men are slain in war, and that in peace "harvests wave and commerce swells her sail." If this be humanity, for which he meant it, is it politics? Another purpose of this epistle appears to have been to prepare the public for the reception of some tragedy he might have in hand. His lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him "repent his passion for the stage;" and the particular praise bestowed on *Othello* and *Oroonoko* looks as if some such character as Zanga was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison, of New College, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so wonderfully some time afterwards in the *Night Thoughts*, of making the public a party to his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he did not insert it in his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The booksellers in the late body of English poetry should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors.* This I shall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I think," says he, "the following pieces in four volumes to be the most excusable of all that I have written, and I wish less apology was needful for these. As there is no recalling what is got abroad, the pieces here republished I have revised and corrected, and rendered them as pardonable as it was in my power to do."

Shall the gates of repentance be shut only against literary sinners?

When Addison published *Cato*, in the year 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verses. This is one of the pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not republish.

On the appearance of his poem on *The Last Day*, Addison did not return Young's compliment; but *The Englishman* of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. *The Last Day* was published soon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's *imprimatur*—for it was printed at Oxford—is dated March 19, 1713. From the exordium, Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards "with Britain's hero set their souls on fire," he draws, he says, a deeper scene. Marlborough had been considered by Britain as her hero; but when

* Dr. Johnson, in many cases, thought and directed differently, particularly in Young's works.

The Last Day was published, female cabal had blasted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This serious poem was finished by Young as early as 1710, before he was thirty; for part of it is printed in the *Tatler*.^{*} It was inscribed to the queen in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her that his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation which he formerly received from her royal indulgence.

Of this obligation nothing is now known, unless he alluded to her being his godmother. He is said, indeed, to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the court. In Swift's *Rhapsody on Poetry* are these lines, speaking of the court :

“ Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace,
Where Pope will never show his face,
Where Y—— must torture his invention
To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.”

That Y—— means Young seems clear from four other lines in the same poem :

“ Attend, ye Popes and Youngs and Gays,
And tune your harps and strew your bays ;
Your panegyrics here provide ;
You cannot err on flattery's side.”

Yet who shall say with certainty that Young was a pensioner ? In all modern periods of this country have not the writers on one side been regularly called hirelings, and on the other patriots ?

Of the dedication the complexion is clearly political : it speaks in the highest terms of the late peace. It gives her majesty praise, indeed, for her victories, but says that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her ; nor will he lose her there, he says, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he beholds the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The queen was soon called away from this lower world to a place where human praise or human flattery, even less general than this, are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party ? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance towards politics, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the church was in danger had not yet subsided. *The Last Day*, written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry and their friends.

Before the queen's death, *The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love*, was sent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband Lord Guildford, 1554 ; a story chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the

^{*} Not in the *Tatler*, but in the *Guardian*, May 9, 1713.

Countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his presumption, that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the Countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. "To behold," he proceeds, "a person only virtuous, stirs in us a prudent regret; to behold a person only amiable to the sight, warms us with a religious indignation; but to turn our eyes to a Countess of Salisbury, gives us pleasure and improvement; it works a sort of miracle, occasions the bias of our nature to fall off from sin, and makes our very senses and affections converts to our religion, and promoters of our duty." His flattery was as ready for the other sex as for ours, and was at least as well adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his friend Jervas, that he is just arrived from Oxford; that every one is much concerned for the queen's death, but that no panegyrics are ready yet for the king. Nothing like friendship had yet taken place between Pope and Young; for, soon after the event which Pope mentions, Young published a poem on the queen's death and his majesty's accession to the throne. It is inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the Lords Justices. Whatever were the obligations which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aim at something of the same sort from George. Of the poem the intention seems to have been, to show that he had the same extravagant strain of praise for a king as for a queen. To discover, at the very onset of a foreigner's reign, that the gods bless his new subjects in such a king, is something more than praise. Neither was this deemed one of his excusable pieces. We do not find it in his works.

Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq., afterwards Marquis of Wharton; a lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller.

To the Dean of Sarum's visitation sermon, already mentioned, were added some verses "by that excellent poetess Mrs. Anne Wharton," upon its being translated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the son of his old friend. In him, during the short time he lived, Young found a patron; and in his dissolute descendant a friend and a companion. The marquis died in April 1715. In the beginning of the next year the young marquis set out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, says the *Biographia*, "on the score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the honour done him of being admitted, though under age, to take his seat in the House of Lords."

With this unhappy character, it is not unlikely that Young went to Ireland. From his letter to Richardson on original composition, it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. "I remember," says he, in that letter, speaking of Swift, "as I and others were taking with him an evening walk, about a mile out of Dublin, he stopped short; we passed on; but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back, and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm, which in its uppermost branches was much

withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, 'I shall be like that tree; I shall die at top.'" Is it not probable that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron?

From *The Englishman* it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713. Yet *Busiris* was not brought upon Drury-lane stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, "because the late instances he had received of his grace's undeserved and uncommon favour, in an affair of some consequence foreign to the theatre, had taken from him the privilege of choosing a patron." The dedication he afterwards suppressed.

Busiris was followed in the year 1721 by *The Revenge*. He dedicated this famous tragedy to the Duke of Wharton. "Your grace," says the dedication, "has been pleased to make yourself accessory to the following scenes, not only by suggesting the most beautiful incident in them, but by making all possible provision for the success of the whole."

That his grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident might have been, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida, in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated *Marriage à la Mode* to Wharton's infamous relation Rochester, whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus: "My present fortune is his bounty, and my future his care; which I will venture to say will be always remembered to his honour, since he, I know, intended his generosity as an encouragement to merit; though through his very pardonable partiality to one who bears him so sincere a duty and respect, I happen to receive the benefit of it." That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this dedication from his works. He should have remembered that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for the most beautiful incident in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied:

"Be this thy partial smile from censure free!
'Twas meant for merit, thought it fell on me."

While Young, who, in his *Love of Fame*, complains grievously how often "dedications wash an Æthiop white," was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was perhaps beginning to describe the "scorn and wonder of his days" in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and the duke's regard for Young, added to his "lust of praise," procured to All Souls College a donation, which was not forgotten by the poet when he dedicated *The Revenge*.

It will surprise you to see me cite 2d Atkins, case 136, *Stiles v. the Attorney-General*, March 14, 1740, as authority for the life of a

poet. But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of the persons whom they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities, granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young, were for legal considerations. One was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his grace's bounty in a style princely and commendable, if not legal—"considering that the public good is advanced by the encouragement of learning and the polite arts, and being pleased therein with the attempts of Dr. Young, in consideration thereof, and of the love I bear him, &c." The other was dated the 10th of July, 1722.

Young, on his examination, swore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of 100*l.* which had been offered him for life if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the duke had given him a bond for 600*l.*, dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journeys, and being at great expenses, in order to be chosen member of the House of Commons, at the duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of 200*l.* and 400*l.* in the gift of All Souls College, on his grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

Of his adventures in the Exeter family I am unable to give any account. The attempt to get into parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgment wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the *Biographia*, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears. But we must pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a letter addressed to their common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek :

" *In joy once join'd, in sorrow, now, for years—
Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
Tickell, accept this verse, thy mournful due.*"

From your account of Tickell, it appears that he and Young used to "communicate to each other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least things."

In 1719 appeared *A Paraphrase on part of the Book of Job*. Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be known from his letter to Curll : "You seem, in the collection you propose, to have omitted what I think may claim the first place in it; I mean, *A Translation from part of Job*, printed by Mr. Tonson." The dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Mr. Tonson's edition, while it speaks with satisfaction of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. But

every one who sings in the dark does not sing from joy. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his satires it would not have been possible to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in your account of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the poems to discover when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first satire laments, that "Guilt's chief foe in Addison is fled." The second, addressing himself, asks,

"Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,
Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?
A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed."

The satires were originally published separately in folio, under the title of *The Universal Passion*. These passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his satires soon after he had written the *Paraphrase on Job*. The last satire was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726. In December 1725 the king, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastic strain of compliment as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty.

From the sixth of these poems we learn,

"Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's heart
Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art;"

since the grateful poet tells us, in the next couplet,

"Her favour is diffus'd to that degree,
Excess of goodness, it has dawn'd on me."

Her majesty had stood godmother, and given her name, to the daughter of the lady whom Young married in 1731; and had perhaps shown some attention to Lady Elizabeth's future husband.

The fifth satire, *On Women*, was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these poems, when, in 1728, he gathered them into one publication, he prefixed a preface; in which he observes, that "no man can converse much in the world, but at what he meets with he must either be insensible or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule," he adds, "I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and gives vice and folly the greatest offence. Laughing at the misconduct of the world will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out by another than by reason, whatever some teach." So wrote, and so of course thought, the lively and witty satirist at the grave age of almost fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote *The Last Day*. After all, Swift pronounced of these satires, that they should either have been more angry or more merry.

Is it not somewhat singular that Young preserved, without any palliation, this preface, so bluntly decisive in favour of laughing at the world, in the same collection of his works which contains the mournful, angry, gloomy *Night Thoughts* ? *

At the conclusion of the preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the birth of Love to modern poetry, with the addition, "that poetry, like love, is a little subject to blindness, which makes her mistake her way to preferments and honours; and that she retains a dutiful admiration of her father's family; but divides her favours, and generally lives with her mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours; but was there not something like blindness in the flattery which he sometimes forced her, and her sister Prose, to utter? She was always, indeed, taught by him to entertain a most dutiful admiration of riches; but surely Young, though nearly related to poetry, had no connection with her whom Plato makes the mother of love. That he could not well complain of being related to poverty appears clearly from the frequent bounties which his gratitude records, and from the wealth which he left behind him. By *The Universal Passion* he acquired no vulgar fortune—more than 3,000*l.* A considerable sum had already been swallowed up in the South Sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His Muse makes poetical use more than once of a South Sea dream.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his manuscript anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his *Universal Passion*, received from the Duke of Grafton 2,000*l.*; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, "2,000*l.* for a poem!" he said it was the best bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth 4,000*l.*

This story may be true; but it seems to have been raised from the two answers of Lord Burghley and Sir Philip Sidney in Spenser's life.

After inscribing his satires, not perhaps without the hopes of preferment and honours, to such names as the Duke of Dorset, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germaine, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyric. In 1726 he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title sufficiently explains the intention. If Young must be acknowledged a ready celebrator, he did not endeavour, or did not choose, to be a lasting one. *The Instalment* is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his *excusable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of bestowing immortality:

" Oh, how I long, enkindled by the theme,
In deep eternity to launch thy name !"

The bounty of the former reign seems to have been continued, possibly increased, in this. Whatever it might have been, the poet thought he deserved it; for he was not ashamed to acknowledge

* "No English poem has ever been so popular on the Continent as the *Night Thoughts*. It pleases all readers; for there is genius enough for the few, and folly enough for the many."—SOUTHEY.

what, without his acknowledgment, would now perhaps never have been known :

" My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire ;
The streams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,
Refresh the dry domains of poesy."

If the purity of modern patriotism will term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with *Ocean, an Ode*. The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase and the encouragement of the seamen ; that they might be " invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country ;" a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an *Ode to the King, Pater Patriæ*, and an *Essay on Lyric Poetry*. It is but justice to confess, that he preserved neither of them ; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition and in the last consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is a " wish," that concluded the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming ; and of which few, after having formed it, would confess something like their shame by suppression.

It stood originally so high in the author's opinion, that he intitled the poem, *Ocean, an Ode ; concluding with a Wish*. This wish consists of thirteen stanzas. The first runs thus :

" Oh, may I steal
Along the vale
Of humble life, secure from foes ;
My friend sincere,
My judgment clear,
And gentle business my repose !"

The three last stanzas are not more remarkable for just rhymes ; but, altogether, they will make rather a curious page in the life of Young :

" Prophetic schemes,
And golden dreams,
May I, unsanguine, cast away ;
Have what I have,
And live, not leave,
Enamour'd of the present day.

My hours my own,
My faults unknown,
My chief revenue in content ;
Then leave one beam
Of honest fame,
And scorn the labour'd monument.

Unhurt my urn
Till that great TURN
When mighty Nature's self shall die,
Time cease to glide,
With human pride
Sunk in the ocean of eternity !"

It is whimsical, that he, who was soon to bid adieu to rhyme, should

fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his "essay on lyric poetry," prefixed to the poem—"For the more harmony likewise I chose the frequent return of rhyme, which laid me under great difficulties. But difficulties overcome give grace and pleasure. Nor can I account for the pleasure of rhyme in general (of which the moderns are too fond) but from this truth." Yet the moderns surely deserve not much censure for their fondness of what, by their own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

The next paragraph in his essay did not occur to him when he talked of "that great turn" in the stanza just quoted. "But then the writer must take care that the difficulty is overcome; that is, he must make rhyme consist with as perfect sense and expression as could be expected if he was perfectly free from that shackle."

Another part of this essay will convict the following stanza of, what every reader will discover in it, "involuntary burlesque."

"The northern blast,
The shatter'd mast,
The syrt, the whirlpool, and the rock,
The breaking spout,
The stars gone out,
The boiling streight, the monster's shock."

But would the English poets fill quite so many volumes, if all their productions were to be tried, like this, by an elaborate essay on each particular species of poetry of which they exhibit specimens?

If Young be not a lyric poet, he is at least a critic in that sort of poetry; and, if his lyric poetry can be proved bad, it was first proved so by his own criticism. This surely is candid.

Milbourn was styled by Pope "the fairest of critics," only because he exhibited his own version of Virgil to be compared with Dryden's which he condemned, and with which every reader had it not otherwise in his power to compare it. Young was surely not the most unfair of poets for prefixing to a lyric composition an essay on lyric poetry, so just and impartial as to condemn himself.

We shall soon come to a work, before which we find indeed no critical essay, but which disdains to shrink from the touchstone of the severest critic; and which certainly, as I remember to have heard you say, if it contains some of the worst, contains also some of the best things in the language.

Soon after the appearance of *Ocean*, when he was almost fifty, Young entered into orders. In April 1728,* not long after he put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George II.

The tragedy of *The Brothers*, which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The epilogue to *The Brothers*, the only appendages to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an historical epilogue. Finding that "Guilt's dreadful close his narrow scene denied," he, in a manner, continues the tragedy

* Davies, in his life of Garrick, says 1720, and that it (the tragedy of *The Brothers*) was produced thirty-three years after, which corresponds with date in p. 142.

in the epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus "for this night's deed."

Of Young's taking orders something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of the poet in a singular light. When he determined on the church, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in theology; but to Pope, who, in youthful frolic, advised the diligent perusal of Thomas Aquinas. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godliness hearing nothing of him for half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls "an irretrievable demerit."

That attachment to his favourite study, which made him think a poet the surest guide to his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry was the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took orders, he published in prose, 1728, *A true Estimate of Human Life*, dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the queen; and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of King Charles, intitled *An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government*. But the *Second Course*, the counterpart of his *Estimate*, without which it cannot be called a true estimate, though in 1728 it was announced as "soon to be published," never appeared; and his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he relapsed to poetry, and sent into the world "*Imperium Pelagi* : a naval lyric, written in imitation of Pindar's spirit, occasioned by his majesty's return from Hanover, September 1729, and the succeeding peace." It is inscribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the preface we are told, that the ode is the most spirited kind of poetry, and that the Pindaric is the most spirited kind of ode. "This I speak," he adds, "with sufficient candour, at my own very great peril. But truth has an eternal title to our confession, though we are sure to suffer by it." Behold, again, the fairest of poets. Young's *Imperium Pelagi* was ridiculed in Fielding's *Tom Thumb*; but let us not forget that it was one of his pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two epistles to Pope, "concerning the authors of *The Age*," 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious for promotion in the church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his college to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In May 1731 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Lichfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connection with this lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Anne Wharton, who was coheirress of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire. Poetry had lately been taught by Addison to aspire to the arms of nobility, though not with extraordinary happiness.

We may naturally conclude that Young now gave himself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connection, and to the ex-

pectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner in which they had so frequently been exerted.

The next production of his Muse was *The Sea-piece*, in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an "extempore epigram on Voltaire;" who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, Milton's allegory of Sin and Death:

"Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin,
At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin."



YOUNG'S HOUSE AT WELWYN.

From the following passage in the poetical dedication of his *Sea-piece* to Voltaire, it seems that this extemporaneous reproof, if it must be extemporaneous (for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof), was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than the distich just quoted:

"No stranger, sir, though born in foreign climes.
On Dorset downs, when Milton's page,
With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with gentle rhymes?"

By Dorset downs he probably meant Mr. Dodington's seat. In Pitt's poems is "An Epistle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetshire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722."

"While with your Dodington retir'd you sit,
Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit," &c.

Thomson, in his *Autumn*, addressing Mr. Dodington, calls his seat the seat of the Muses,

"Where, in the secret bower and winding walk,
For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay."

The praises Thomson bestows but a few lines before on Philips, the second

"Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
With British freedom sing the British song,"

added to Thomson's example and success, might perhaps induce Young, as we shall see presently, to write his great work without rhyme.

In 1734 he published *The Foreign Address; or, the best Argument for Peace, occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs*. Written in the character of a sailor. It is not to be found in the author's four volumes.

He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar; and perhaps at last resolved to turn his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to ode, which few of Young's readers will regret:

"My shell, which Clio gave, which *kings applaud*,
Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd abroad,
Adieu!"

In a species of poetry altogether his own, he next tried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived 1741. Lady Elizabeth had lost, after her marriage with Young, an amiable daughter by her former husband, just after she was married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife, though he was married a second time, to a daughter of Sir John Barnard's, whose son is the present peer. Mr. and Mrs. Temple have generally been considered as Philander and Narcissa. From the great friendship which constantly subsisted between Mr. Temple and Young, as well as from other circumstances, it is probable that the poet had both him and Mrs. Temple in view for these characters; though at the same time some passages respecting Philander do not appear to suit either Mr. Temple or any other person with whom Young was known to be connected or acquainted, while all the circumstances relating to Narcissa have been constantly found applicable to Young's daughter-in-law.

At what short intervals the poet tells us he was wounded by the deaths of the three persons particularly lamented, none that have read *The Night Thoughts* (and who has not read them?) need to be informed.

"Insatiate archer! could not one suffice?
Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn."

Yet how is it possible that Mr. and Mrs. Temple and Lady Elizabeth Young could be these three victims, over whom Young has hitherto been pitied for having to pour the midnight sorrows of his religious poetry? Mrs. Temple died in 1736; Mr. Temple four years afterwards, in 1740; and the poet's wife seven months after

Mr. Temple, in 1741. How could the insatiate archer thrice slay his peace, in these three persons, "ere thrice the moon had filled her horn?"

But in the short preface to *The Complaint* he seriously tells us, "that the occasion of this poem was real, not fictitious; and that the facts mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of the writer." It is probable, therefore, that in these three contradictory lines the poet complains more than the father-in-law, the friend, or the widower.

Whatever names belong to these facts, or, if the names be those generally supposed, whatever heightening a poet's sorrow may have given the facts, to the sorrow Young felt from them, religion and morality are indebted for the *Night Thoughts*. There is a pleasure sure in sadness which mourners only know!

Of these poems the two or three first have been perused perhaps more eagerly and more frequently than the rest. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his original motive for taking up the pen was answered; his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We still find the same pious poet; but we hear less of Philander and Narcissa, and less of the mourner whom he loved to pity.

Mrs. Temple died of a consumption at Lyons, in her way to Nice, the year after her marriage; that is, when poetry relates the fact, "in her bridal hour." It is more than poetically true, that Young accompanied her to the Continent:

"I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid North,
And bore her nearer to the sun."

But in vain. Her funeral was attended with the difficulties painted in such animated colours in *Night the Third*. After her death, the remainder of the party passed the ensuing winter at Nice.

The poet seems perhaps in these compositions to dwell with more melancholy on the death of Philander and Narcissa than of his wife. But it is only for this reason. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the *Night Thoughts* Philander and Narcissa are often mentioned and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living, to whom the Prince of Wales was godfather.

That domestic grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language, it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness to contend that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means sure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of his satires. In so long a life, causes for discontent and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me that his Muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. "Night thoughts" were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet, and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloominess. In his *Last Day*, almost his earliest poem, he calls her "the melancholy maid,"

" Whom dismal scenes delight,
Frequent at tombs and in the realms of Night."

In the prayer which concludes the second book of the same poem, he says :

" The gloom of solemn night
To sacred thought may forcibly invite.
Oh, how divine to tread the milky way,
To the bright palace of eternal day !"

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is said by Spence to have sent him a human skull, with a candle in it as a lamp ; and the poet is reported to have used it.

What he calls *The true Estimate of Human Life*, which has already been mentioned, exhibits only the wrong side of the tapestry ; and being asked why he did not show the right, he is said to have replied, that he could not. By others it has been told me that this was finished ; but that, before there existed any copy, it was torn in pieces by a lady's monkey.

Still, is it altogether fair to dress up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the *Night Thoughts* to prove the gloominess of Young ; and to show that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in some measure the sullen inspiration of discontent ?

From those who answer in the affirmative it should not be concealed that, though "*Invisibilia non decipiunt*" appeared upon a deception in Young's grounds, and "*Ambulantes in horto audierunt vocem Dei*" on a building in his garden, his parish was indebted to the good humour of the author of the *Night Thoughts* for an assembly and a bowling-green.

Whether you think with me, I know not ; but the famous "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*" always appeared to me to savour more of female weakness than of manly reason. He that has too much feeling to speak ill of the dead, who, if they cannot defend themselves, are at least ignorant of his abuse, will not hesitate by the most wanton calumny to destroy the quiet, the reputation, the fortune, of the living. Yet censure is not heard beneath the tomb any more than praise. "*De mortuis nil nisi verum—De vivis nil nisi bonum*" would much approach nearer to good sense. After all, the few handfuls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, feel not much concern whether Young pass now for a man of sorrow, or for a "fellow of infinite jest." To this favour must come the whole family of Yorick. His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is still less solicitous on this head.

But to a son of worth and sensibility, it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded at last in bringing his "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

The humanity of the world, little satisfied with inventing perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The *Biographia*, and every account of

Young, pretty roundly assert this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which, the *Biographia* itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the *Night Thoughts* with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as their Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime and terrible be offended should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be true, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proof? Perhaps it is clear from the poems.

From the first line to the last of the *Night Thoughts* no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the Second Night I find an expression which betrays something else—that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions, one of the Duke of Wharton's set. The poet styles him "gay friend;" an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror. A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short poem of fourteen lines in the early part of his life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the First Night, the address to the poet's supposed son is,

"Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee."

In the Fifth Night—

"And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
Of life, to hang his airy nest on high?"

Is this a picture of the son of the rector of Welwyn?

Eighth Night—

"In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far),"

which even now does not apply to his son.

In Night Five—

"So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate;
Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes;
And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth!"

At the beginning of the Fifth Night we find,—

"Lorenzo, to recriminate is just;
I grant the man is vain who writes for praise."

But, to cut short all inquiry; if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems, be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was not old enough, when they were written, to recriminate or to be a father. The *Night Thoughts* were begun immediately after the mournful event of 1741. The "first nights" appear in the books of the Company of Stationers

as the property of Robert Dodsley in 1742. The preface to *Night Seven* is dated July 7, 1744. The marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in May 1731. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1741 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this father, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only eight years old.

An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

"Who, then, was Lorenzo?" exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If we cannot be sure that he was his son, which would have been finely terrible, was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the poet's fancy: like the Quintus of Anti Lucretius, "*quo nomine*," says Polignac, "*quemvis Atheum intellige*." That this was the case, many expressions in the *Night Thoughts* would seem to prove, did not a passage in *Night Eight* appear to show that he had something in his eye for the groundwork at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

"Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee dead,
Or send thee to her hermitage with L——."

The *Biographia*, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that son's life-time, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for misbehaviour. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the life of Young, it is not easy to discover. Was the son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* indeed forbidden his college for a time at one of the universities? The author of *Paradise Lost* is by some supposed to have been disgracefully ejected from the other. From juvenile follies who is free? But, whatever the *Biographia* chooses to relate, the son of Young experienced no dismission from his college either lasting or temporary.

Yet, were nature to indulge him with a second youth, and to leave him at the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably spend it differently—who would not?—he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father. But, from the same experience, he would as certainly, in the same case, be treated differently by his father.

Young was a poet: poets, with reverence be it spoken, do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when compelled by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poets.

He who is connected with the author of the *Night Thoughts* only by veneration for the poet and the Christian, may be allowed to observe that Young is one of those concerning whom, as you remark

in your account of Addison, it is proper rather to say "nothing that is false than all that is true."

But the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expense of his father's memory, from follies which, if it may be thought blameable in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praiseworthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of the *Night Thoughts*, notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himself from earls and dukes, from the speakers of the House of Commons, lords commissioners of the Treasury, and chancellors of the Exchequer. In Night Eight, the politician plainly betrays himself :

"Think no post needful that demands a knave :
When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
So P—— thought : think better if you can."

Yet it must be confessed that, at the conclusion of Night Nine, weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his soul :

"Henceforth
Thy *patron* he, whose diadem has dropp'd
Yon gems of heaven ; Eternity thy prize :
And leave the racers of the world their own."

The Fourth Night was addressed by "a much-indebted Muse" to the Hon. Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke ; who meant to have laid the Muse under still greater obligation by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The First Night concludes with this passage :

"Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides :
Or Milton, thee. Ah ! could I reach your strain ;
Or his who made Meonides our own !
Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing.
Oh, had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track
Which opens out of darkness into day !
Oh, had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd, where I sink, and sung immortal man ;
How had it bless'd mankind, and rescu'd me !"

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his "wing of fire," and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and approved the dedication, he countenanced this attack on the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muse.

Part of "paper-sparing" Pope's third book of the *Odyssey*, deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a letter signed "E. Young," which is clearly the handwriting of our Young. The letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure ; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The request was a prologue, I am told.

May the 2d.

"DEAR SIR,—Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that instance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friendship I am very sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to conceive how a 'trifle of this nature' may be of serious moment to me: and while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall not be so absurd as to make any further step without it. I know you are much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leisure.

"I am, sir, your most faithful and obedient servant,

"E. YOUNG."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in Night Seven—

"Pope, who couldst make immortals, art thou dead?"

Either the essay, then, was dedicated to a patron who disproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young appears, in his old age, to have bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in Night Four, should not be excluded. They afford a picture by his own hand, from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind and the complexion of his life.

"Ah, me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice)
My very master knows me not.
I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.

When in his courtiers' ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the nectar of the great;
And squeeze my hand,—and beg me come to-morrow.

Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege.

If this song lives, posterity shall know
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late;
Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme
For future vacancies in church or state."

Deduct from the writer's age "twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy," and you will still leave him more than forty when he sat down to the miserable siege of court-favour. He has before told us—

"A fool at forty is a fool indeed."

After all, the siege seems to have been raised only in consequence of what the general thought his "death-bed."

By these extraordinary poems, written after he was sixty, of which I have been led to say so much, I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, *The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts*. While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear, perhaps, in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicatory; he would not pass for a worse Christian or for a worse man. This enviable praise is due to Young. Can it be claimed by every writer? His dedications, after all, he had, perhaps, no right to suppress. They all, I believe, speak not a little to the credit of his gratitude for favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgment of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his *Night Thoughts* the French are particularly fond?

Of the *Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk*, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of English poetry, and that I am sorry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the *Night Thoughts* of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745, he wrote *Reflections on the public situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle*, indignant, as it appears, to behold

“ A pope-bred princeling crawl ashore,
And whistle cut-throats, with those swords that scrap’d
Their barren rocks for wretched sustenance,
To cut his passage to the British throne.”

This political poem might be called a Night Thought. Indeed, it was originally printed as the conclusion of the *Night Thoughts*, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the second edition of Howe's *Devout Meditations* is a letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addressed to Archibald Macaulay, Esq., thanking him for the book, which, he says, “ he shall never lay far out of his reach; for a greater demonstration of a sound head and a sincere heart he never saw.”

In 1753, when *The Brothers* had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of *The Brothers* would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but by the bad success of his play the society was not a loser. The author made up the sum he originally intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entitled *The Centaur not fabulous, in Six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue*. The conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the

third letter is described the death-bed of the "gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont." His last words were, "My principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife." Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the twin production of fancy, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness. Report has been accustomed to call Altamont Lord Euston.

The Old Man's Relapse, occasioned by an epistle to Walpole, if written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a miscellany published thirty years before his death. In 1758, he exhibited the old man's relapse in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a sermon addressed to the king.

The lively letter in prose, *On Original Composition*, addressed to Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*, appeared in 1759. Though he despair "of breaking through the frozen obstructions of age, and care's incumbent cloud, into that flow of thought and brightness of expression which subjects so polite require," yet it is more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded fourscore. Some sevenfold volumes put him in mind of Ovid's sevenfold channels of the Nile at the conflagration :

" Ostia septem
Pulverulenta vocant, septem sine flumine valles."

Such leaden labours are like Lycurgus's iron money, which were so much less in value than in bulk, that it required barns for strong boxes, and a yoke of oxen to draw five hundred pounds.

If there is a famine of invention in the land, we must travel, he says, like Joseph's brethren, far for food ; we must visit the remote and rich ancients. But an inventive genius may safely stay at home ; that, like the widow's cruse, is divinely replenished from within, and affords us a miraculous delight. He asks why it should seem altogether impossible that heaven's latest editions of the human mind may be the most correct and fair ? And Jonson, he tells us, was very learned, as Samson was very strong, to his own hurt. Blind to the nature of tragedy, he pulled down all antiquity on his head, and buried himself under it.

Is this "care's incumbent cloud," or "the frozen obstructions of age ?"

In this letter, Pope is severely censured for his "fall from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds, for putting Achilles into petticoats a second time ;" but we are told that the dying swan talked over an epic plan with Young a few weeks before his decease.

Young's chief inducement to write this letter was, as he confesses, that he might erect a monumental marble to the memory of an old friend. He, who employed his pious pen for almost the last time in thus doing justice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison, might probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lesson for the deaths of others.

In the postscript he writes to Richardson, that he will see in his next how far Addison is an original. But no other letter appears.

The few lines which stand in the last edition, as "sent by Lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not long before his lordship's death," were indeed so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by "the muse's latest spark." The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his Tusculum "*La Trappe*."

"Love thy country, wish it well,
Not with too intense a care;
'Tis enough, that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, flattery's praise,
With unmov'd indifference view;
Learn to tread life's dangerous maze
With unerring virtue's clue.

Void of strong desire and fear,
Life's wide ocean trust no more;
Strive thy little bark to steer
With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the port of peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free;
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be.

Easy shall thy passage be,
Cheerful thy allotted stay,
Short th' account 'twixt God and thee:
Hope shall meet thee on the way.

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's self shall let thee in,
Where its never-changing state
Full perfection shall begin."

The poem was accompanied by a letter.

"*La Trappe*, the 27th of Oct. 1761.

"Dear Sir,—You seemed to like the ode I sent you for your amusement; I now send it you as a present. If you please to accept of it, and are willing that our friendship should be known when we are gone, you will be pleased to leave this among those of your own papers that may possibly see the light by a posthumous publication. God send us health while we stay, and an easy journey!

"My dear Dr. Young,

"Yours most cordially,

"MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a short time before his death, Young published *Resignation*. Notwithstanding the manner in which it was really forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise, on the other side of fourscore, by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited?

To Mrs. Montagu, the famous champion of Shakespeare, I am indebted for the history of *Resignation*. Observing that Mrs. Boscawen, in the midst of her grief for the loss of the admiral, derived consolation from the perusal of the *Night Thoughts*, Mrs. Montagu proposed a visit to the author. From conversing with Young, Mrs. Boscawen derived still further consolation; and to that visit she and the world were indebted for this poem. It compliments Mrs. Montagu in the following lines:

"Yet write I must. A lady sues:
How shameful her request!
My brain in labour with dull rhyme,
Hers teeming with the best!"

And again:

"And friend you have, and I the same,
Whose prudent, soft address
Will bring to life those healing thoughts
Which died in your distress.

That friend, the spirit of thy theme
Extracting for your ease,
Will leave to me the dreg, in thoughts
Too common, such as these."

By the same lady I was enabled to say, in her own words, that Young's unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion than even in the author; that the Christian was in him a character still more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime, than the poet; and that in his ordinary conversation,

"Letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky."

Notwithstanding Young had said, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, that "blank verse is verse unfallen, uncurs'd; verse reclaimed, re-enthroned in the true language of the gods:" notwithstanding he administered consolation to his own grief in this immortal language, Mrs. Boscawen was comforted in rhyme.

While the poet and the Christian were applying this comfort, Young had himself occasion for comfort, in consequence of the sudden death of Richardson, who was printing the former part of the poem. Of Richardson's death he says:

"When Heaven would kindly set us free,
And earth's enchantment end;
It takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a friend."

To *Resignation* was prefixed an apology for its appearance; to which much credit is due than to the generality of such apologies,

from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he desires of his executors, in a particular manner, that all his manuscript books and writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying entreaty to his housekeeper, to whom he left 1000*l.*, "that all his manuscripts might be destroyed as soon as he was dead, which would greatly oblige her deceased friend."

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviving those he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two friends, his housekeeper and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may serve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for sounding names and titles, to be informed that the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not blush to leave a legacy to his "friend Henry Stevens, a hatter at the Temple-gate." Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young. But at eighty-four, "where," as he asks in *The Centaur*, "is that world into which we were born?"

The same humility which marked a hatter and a housekeeper for the friends of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, had before bestowed the same title on his footman, in an epitaph in his *Churchyard* upon James Baker, dated 1749, which I am glad to find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel published by Kidegell in 1755, called *The Card*, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fusby.

In 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young.

He had performed no duty for three or four years, but he retained his intellects to the last.

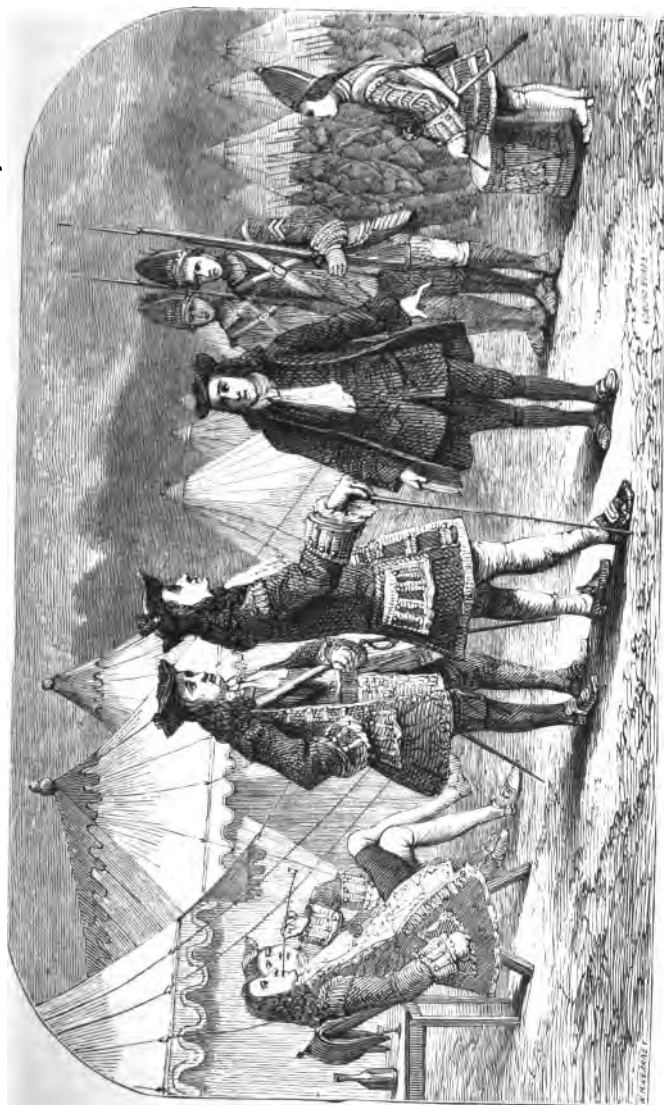
Much is told in the *Biographia*, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial; of the master and children of a charity-school which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was not caused to toll as often as upon those occasions bells usually toll. Had that humanity which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead been shown in its proper place to the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the preface to *Night Seven*, for representing his friend's request about his funeral.

During some part of his life Young was abroad, but I have not been able to learn any particulars.

In his seventh satire he says,

"When, after battle, I the field have seen
Spread o'er with ghastly shapes which once were men."

It is known also that from this or from some other field he once wandered into the camp with a classic in his hand, which he was reading intently; and had some difficulty to prove that he was only an absent poet, and not a spy.



YOUNG SUSPECTED OF BEING A SPY.

The curious reader of Young's life will naturally inquire to what it was owing that, though he lived almost forty years after he took orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the *Night Thoughts* ended his days upon a living which came to him from his college without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the church. To satisfy curiosity of this kind is, at this distance of time, far from easy. The parties themselves know not often, at the instant, why they are neglected, or why they are preferred. The neglect of Young is by some ascribed to his having attached himself to the Prince of Wales, and to his having preached an offensive sermon at St. James's. It has been told me that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that whenever any one reminded the king of Young, the only answer was, "He has a pension." All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following letter from Secker, only serves to show at what a late period of life the author of the *Night Thoughts* solicited preferment :

"Deanery of St. Paul's, July 8, 1758.

"Good Dr. Young,—I have long wondered that more suitable notice of your great merit hath not been taken by persons in power. But how to remedy the omission I see not. No encouragement hath ever been given me to mention things of this nature to his majesty; and therefore, in all likelihood, the only consequence of doing it would be weakening the little influence which else I may possibly have on some other occasions. Your fortune and your reputation set you above the need of advancement; and your sentiments above that concern for it on your own account, which, on that of the public, is sincerely felt by

"Your loving brother,

"THO. CANT."

At last, at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, clerk of the closet to the Princess Dowager.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life seems to have panted. Though he took orders, he never entirely shook off politics. He was always the lion of his master Milton, "pawing to get free his hinder parts." By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Again, Young was a poet; and, again, with-reverence be it spoken, poets by profession do not always make the best clergymen. If the author of the *Night Thoughts* composed many sermons, he did not oblige the public with many.

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out for a man retired from the world. But he seemed to have forgotten that the same verse which contains *oblitus meorum*, contains also *obliviscendus et illis*. The brittle chain of worldly friendship and patronage is broken as effectually when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore, it only appears that the shore also recedes: in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world will find himself

reality deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the coxcomb treats his mistress—to be threatened with desertion in order to increase fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with his tub.

Of the domestic manners and petty habits of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority. But who shall dare to say, to-morrow I will be wise or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon inquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a letter from Tschärner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tschärner says, he has lately spent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author takes all the ease and pleasure mankind can desire. "Every thing about him shows the man, each individual being placed by rule. All is neat, without art. He is very pleasant in conversation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may possibly be true; but Tschärner's was a first visit, a visit of curiosity and admiration, and a visit which the author expected.

Of Edward Young, an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's Parson Adams. The original of that famous painting was William Young, who was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the booksellers from Greek; and if he did not seem to be his own friend, was at least no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world argues, were it not sufficiently known, that the author of the *Night Thoughts* bore some resemblance to Adams.

The attention which Young bestowed upon the perusal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any passage pleased him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On these passages he bestowed a second reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned to much of what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books which I have seen are by those notes of approbation so swelled beyond their real bulk, that they will hardly shut.

"What though we wade in wealth or soar in fame?
Earth's highest station ends in 'Here he lies';
And 'dust to dust' concludes her noblest song."

The author of these lines is not without his *hic jacet*.

By the good sense of his son, it contains none of that praise which no marble can make the bad or the foolish merit; which, without the direction of a stone or a turf, will find its way, sooner or later, to the deserving.

M. S.
Optimi Parentis
EDWARDI YOUNG, LL.D.
Hujus Ecclesie rect.
Et Elizabethæ
fœm. prænob.

Conjugis ejus amantissima,
 Pio et gratissimo animo
 Hoc marmor posuit
 F. Y.
 Filius superstes.

Is it not strange that the author of the *Night Thoughts* has inscribed no monument to the memory of his lamented wife? Yet what marble will endure as long as the poems?

Such, my good friend, is the account which I have been able to collect of the great Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of, dear sir,

Your greatly obliged friend,

HERBERT CROFT, JUN.

. Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 1780.

P. S. This account of Young was seen by you in manuscript, you know, sir; and though I could not prevail on you to make any alteration, you insisted on striking out one passage, because it said, that if I did not wish you to live long for your sake, I did for the sake of myself and of the world. But this postscript you will not see before the printing of it; and I will say here, in spite of you, how I feel myself honoured and bettered by your friendship: and that if I do credit to the church, after which I always longed, and for which I am now going to give in exchange the bar, though not at so late a period of life as Young took orders, it will be owing, in no small measure, to my having had the happiness of calling the author of *The Rambler* my friend.

H. C.

Oxford, Oct. 1782.

Of Young's poems it is difficult to give any general character, for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long, and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth and sometimes rugged; his style is sometimes concatenated and sometimes abrupt, sometimes diffusive and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment; and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.

He was not one of those writers whom experience improves, and who, observing their own faults, become gradually correct. His poem on *The Last Day*, his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the last day makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction and disdains expression.

His story of *Jane Grey* was never popular. It is written with elegance enough; but Jane is too heroic to be pitied.

The Universal Passion is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of epigrams; but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth.

His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations were often happy, and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and Juvenal; and he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprise.

To translate he never condescended, unless his *Paraphrase on Job* may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful; he indeed favoured himself, by choosing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his *Night Thoughts* he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was *Resignation*; in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his *Ocean* or his *Merchant*. It was very falsely represented as a proof of decayed faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in the highest vigour.

His tragedies, not making part of the collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Stevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In *Busiris* there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination: but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have; and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. *The Revenge* approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage. The first design seems suggested by *Othello*; but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so

introduced and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of *The Brothers* I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the public.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation; sometimes happily, as in his parallel of quicksilver with pleasure, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a lady of whose praise he would have been justly proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact. But sometimes he is less lucky; as when, in his *Night Thoughts*, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the cluster of creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says that they all hang on the great vine, drinking the "nectareous juice of immortal life."

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable. In *The Last Day* he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the "trump of doom," by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The prophet says of Tyre, that "her merchants are princes." Young says of Tyre, in his *Merchant*,

"Her merchants princes, and each dock a throne."

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, "climes were paid down." Antithesis is his favourite. "They for kindness hate;" and "because she's right, she's ever in the wrong."

His versification is his own; neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers: he picks up no hemistichs; he copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry; and that he composed with great labour and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

ELIJAH FENTON.*

(1683-1730.)

The brevity with which I am to write the account of Elijah Fenton is not the effect of indifference or negligence. I have sought intelligence among his relations in his native country, but have not obtained it.

* Johnson.

He was born near Newcastle in Staffordshire, of an ancient family,* whose estate was very considerable; but he was the youngest of eleven children; and being therefore necessarily destined to some lucrative employment, was sent first to school, and afterwards to Cambridge.† But, with many other wise and virtuous men, who at that time of discord and debate consulted conscience, whether well or ill informed, more than interest, he doubted the legality of the government, and refusing to qualify himself for public employment by the oaths required, left the university without a degree; but I never heard that the enthusiasm of opposition impelled him to separation from the church.

By this perverseness of integrity he was driven out a commoner of nature, excluded from the regular modes of profit and prosperity, and reduced to pick up a livelihood uncertain and fortuitous; but it must be remembered that he kept his name unsullied, and never suffered himself to be reduced, like too many of the same sect, to mean arts and dishonourable shifts. Whoever mentioned Fenton mentioned him with honour.

The life that passes in penury must necessarily pass in obscurity. It is impossible to trace Fenton from year to year, or to discover what means he used for his support. He was awhile secretary to Charles Earl of Orrery in Flanders, and tutor to his young son, who afterwards mentioned him with great esteem and tenderness. He was at one time assistant in the school of Mr. Bonwicke in Surrey; and at another kept a school for himself at Sevenoaks in Kent, which he brought into reputation; but was persuaded to leave it (1710) by Mr. St. John, with promises of a more honourable employment.

* He was born at Shelton, near Newcastle, May 20, 1683; and was the son of John Fenton, an attorney-at-law, and one of the coroners for the county of Stafford. His father died in 1684; and his grave, in the churchyard of Stoke-upon-Trent, is distinguished by the following elegant Latin inscription from the pen of his son:

H. S. E.
JOANNES FENTON
de Shelton
antiquâ stirpe generosus;
juxta reliquias conjugis
CATHARINÆ
formâ, moribus, pietate,
optimo viro dignissimæ:
Qui
intemeratâ in ecclesiam fide,
et virtutibus intaminatis enituit;
neque ingenii lepore
bonis artibus expoliti,
ac animo erga omnes benevolo,
Decem annos uxori dilectæ superstes
magnum sui desiderium bonis
omnibus reliquit,
Anno { salutis humanæ 1694,
 ætatis suæ 56.

† He was entered of Jesus College, and took a bachelor's degree in 1704; but it appears, by the list of Cambridge graduates, that he removed in 1706 to Trinity Hall.

His opinions, as he was a nonjuror, seem not to have been remarkably rigid. He wrote with great zeal and affection the praises of Queen Anne, and very willingly and liberally extolled the Duke of Marlborough, when he was (1707) at the height of his glory.

He expressed still more attention to Marlborough and his family by an elegiac pastoral on the Marquis of Blandford, which could be prompted only by respect or kindness; for neither the duke nor the duchess desired the praise, or liked the cost of patronage.

The elegance of his poetry entitled him to the company of the wits of his time, and the amiableness of his manners made him loved wherever he was known. Of his friendship to Southern and Pope there are lasting monuments.

He published in 1707 a collection of poems.

By Pope he was once placed in a station that might have been of great advantage. Craggs, when he was advanced to be secretary of state (about 1720), feeling his own want of literature, desired Pope to procure him an instructor, by whose help he might supply the deficiencies of his education. Pope recommended Fenton, in whom Craggs found all that he was seeking. There was now a prospect of ease and plenty; for Fenton had merit, and Craggs had generosity: but the small-pox suddenly put an end to the pleasing expectation.

When Pope, after the great success of his *Iliad*, undertook the *Odyssey*, being, as it seems, weary of translating, he determined to engage auxiliaries. Twelve books he took to himself, and twelve he distributed between Broome and Fenton: the books allotted to Fenton were the first, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth. It is observable that he did not take the eleventh, which he had before translated into blank verse; neither did Pope claim it, but committed it to Broome. How the two associates performed their parts is well known to the readers of poetry, who have never been able to distinguish their books from those of Pope.

In 1723 was performed his tragedy of *Mariamne*; to which Southern, at whose house it was written, is said to have contributed such hints as his theatrical experience supplied. When it was shown to Cibber, it was rejected by him, with the additional insolence of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employment of honest labour, by which he might obtain that support which he could never hope from his poetry. The play was acted at the other theatre; and the brutal petulance of Cibber was confuted, though perhaps not shamed, by general applause. Fenton's profits are said to have amounted to near a thousand pounds, with which he discharged a debt contracted by his attendance at court.

Fenton seems to have had some peculiar system of versification. *Mariamne* is written in lines of ten syllables, with few of those redundant terminations which the drama not only admits but requires, as more nearly approaching to real dialogue. The tenour of his verse is so uniform, that it cannot be thought casual; and yet upon what principle he so constructed it, is difficult to discover.

The mention of his play brings to my mind a very trifling occurrence. Fenton was one day in the company of Broome his associate, and Ford, a clergyman at that time too well known, whose abilities, instead of furnishing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and dis-

solute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wise. They determined all to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was acted that night; and Fenton, as a dramatic poet, took them to the stage-door: where the door-keeper inquiring who they were, was told that they were three very necessary men, Ford, Broome, and Fenton. The name in the play, which Pope restored to Brook, was then Broome.

It was perhaps after this play that he undertook to revise the punctuation of Milton's poems, which, as the author neither wrote the original copy nor corrected the press, was supposed capable of amendment. To this edition he prefixed a short and elegant account of Milton's life, written at once with tenderness and integrity.

He published likewise (1729) a very splendid edition of Waller, with notes often useful, often entertaining, but too much extended by long quotations from Clarendon. Illustrations drawn from a book so easily consulted, should be made by reference rather than transcription.

The latter part of his life was calm and pleasant. The relict of Sir William Trumbull invited him, by Pope's recommendation, to educate her son; whom he first instructed at home, and then attended to Cambridge. The lady afterwards detained him with her, as the auditor of her accounts. He often wandered to London, and amused himself with the conversation of his friends.

He died in 1730, at Easthampstead in Berkshire, the seat of Lady Trumbull; and Pope, who had been always his friend, honoured him with an epitaph, of which he borrowed the first two lines from Crashaw.

Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not lessen by much exercise; for he was very sluggish and sedentary, rose late, and when he had risen, sat down to his books or papers. A woman that once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as she said, that he would "lie a-bed, and be fed with a spoon." This, however, was not the worst that might have been prognosticated; for Pope says, in his letters, that "he died of indolence;" but his immediate distemper was the gout.

Of his morals and his conversation the account is uniform: he was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope; and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.

By a former writer of his life a story is told, which ought not to be forgotten. He used, in the latter part of his time, to pay his relations in the country a yearly visit. At an entertainment made for the family by his eldest brother, he observed that one of his sisters, who had married unfortunately, was absent; and found, upon inquiry, that distress had made her thought unworthy of invitation. As she was at no great distance, he refused to sit at the table till she was called; and when she had taken her place, was careful to show her particular attention.

His collection of poems is now to be considered. The ode to the *Sun* is written upon a common plan, without uncommon sentiments; but its greatest fault is its length. No poem should be long of which

the purpose is only to strike the fancy, without enlightening the understanding by precept, ratiocination, or narrative. A blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight.

Of *Florio* it is sufficient to say, that it is an occasional pastoral, which implies something neither natural nor artificial, neither comic nor serious.

The next ode is irregular, and therefore defective. As the sentiments are pious, they cannot easily be new; for what can be added to topics on which successive ages have been employed?

Of the *Paraphrase on Isaiah* nothing very favourable can be said. Sublime and solemn prose gains little by a change to blank verse; and the paraphrast has deserted his original, by admitting images not Asiatic, at least not Judaical:

"Returning Peace,
Dove-eyed, and robed in white."

Of his petty poems some are very trifling, without any thing to be praised either in the thought or the expression. He is unlucky in his competitions: he tells the same idle tale with Congreve, and does not tell it so well; he translates from Ovid the same epistle as Pope, but I am afraid not with equal happiness.

To examine his performances one by one would be tedious. His translation from Homer into blank verse will find few readers, while another can be had in rhyme. The piece addressed to Lambard is no disagreeable specimen of epistolary poetry; and his ode to the Lord Gower was pronounced by Pope the next ode in the English language to Dryden's *Cecilia*. Fenton may be justly styled an excellent versifier and a good poet.

Whatever I have said of Fenton is confirmed by Pope in a letter, by which he communicated to Broome an account of his death.

To the Rev. Mr. Broome, at Pulham, near Harlestone, Suffolk.

By Beccles Bag.

Dear Sir,—I intended to write to you on this melancholy subject, the death of Mr. Fenton, before yours came: but stayed to have informed myself and you of the circumstances of it. All I hear is, that he felt a gradual decay, though so early in life, and was declining for five or six months. It was not, as I apprehended, the gout in his stomach, but I believe rather a complication first of gross humours, as he was naturally corpulent, not discharging themselves, as he used no sort of exercise. No man better bore the approaches of his dissolution (as I am told), or with less ostentation yielded up his being. The great modesty which you know was natural to him, and the great contempt he had for all sorts of vanity and parade, never appeared more than in his last moments: he had a conscious satisfaction (no doubt) in acting right, in feeling himself honest, true, and unpretending to more than his own. So he died, as he lived, with that secret yet sufficient contentment.

As to any papers left behind him, I dare say they can be but few; for this reason, he never wrote out of vanity, or thought much of the applause of men. I know an instance where he did his utmost to conceal his own merit that way; and if we join to this his natural

love of ease, I fancy we must expect little of this sort : at least I hear of none, except some few remarks on Waller (which his cautious integrity made him leave an order to be given to Mr. Tonson); and perhaps, though it is many years since I saw it, a translation of the first book of *Opptan*. He had begun a tragedy of *Dion*, but made small progress in it.

As to his other affairs, he died poor, but honest ; leaving no debts or legacies, except of a few pounds to Mr. Trumbull and my lady, in token of respect, gratefulness, and mutual esteem.

I shall with pleasure take upon me to draw this amiable, quiet, deserving, unpretending Christian and philosophical character, in his epitaph. There truth may be spoken in a few words : as to flourish and oratory and poetry, I leave them to younger and more lively writers, such as love writing for writing's sake, and would rather show their own fine parts than report the valuable ones of another man. So the elegy I renounce. I condole with you from my heart at the loss of so worthy a man, and a friend to us both. Now he is gone, I must tell you that he has done you many a good office, and set your character in the fairest light to some who either mistook you or knew you not. I doubt not he has done the same for me.

Adieu ! let us love his memory, and profit by his example.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate and real servant,

A. POPE.

AARON HILL.

(1685-1749.)

Aaron Hill, whose father was a gentleman of Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire, was born in Beaufort-buildings in the Strand, London, February 10th, 1685. He was sent to Westminster School, which however he left on account of his narrow circumstances, occasioned by his father's mismanagement, at fourteen years of age. Shortly afterwards he formed a resolution of paying a visit to his relation, Lord Paget, then ambassador at Constantinople ; and accordingly embarked in a ship going there, March the 2d, 1700. When he arrived, Lord Paget received him with much surprise as well as pleasure ; wondering that a person so young should run the hazard of such a voyage, to visit a relation whom he only knew by character. The ambassador immediately provided for him a very learned ecclesiastic in his own house ; and under his tuition, sent him to travel, so that he had an opportunity of seeing Egypt, Palestine, and a great part of the East. With Lord Paget he returned home about the year 1703. A few years after, he was desired to accompany Sir William Wentworth, who was then going to make the tour of Europe ; and with him he travelled two or three years. About the year 1709 he published his first poem, entitled *Camillus*, in honour of the Earl of Peterborough, who was so pleased with the work, that he made the author his secretary,

and showed him much favour. In the same year he wrote the two first books of his epic poem, *Gideon*; to which he afterwards added six other books, but he never completed the work. Being the same year made manager of the theatre in Drury-lane, he wrote his first tragedy, *Elfrid, or the Fair Inconstant*. In 1710, as manager of the opera-house in the Haymarket, he wrote an opera called *Rinaldo*, which met with great success: it was the first that Handel composed after he came to England.

Hill was not only a poet, he was also a great projector. In the year 1715 he undertook to make an oil, as sweet as that from olives, from beech-nuts, and obtained a patent for the purpose. But this being an undertaking of great extent, he was obliged to work with other men's assistance and materials; and disputes arising among them, terminated in the overthrow of the scheme. Various misrepresentations were circulated on the subject, which necessitated on the part of Mr. Hill the publication of *A Fair State of the Accounts* (1716). In 1716 he wrote another tragedy, called *The Fatal Vision, or the Fall of Siam*.

About the year 1718 he wrote a poem, called the *Northern Star*, upon the actions of Peter the Great; and several years after he was complimented with a gold medal from the Empress Catherine, according to the Czar's desire before his death. He was also to have written his life from papers of the Czar's, which were to have been sent to him; but the death of the Czarina, soon afterwards, prevented it. In 1723 he brought his tragedy of *King Henry the Fifth* upon the stage at Drury-lane, which is (as he says in the preface) a new fabric, yet built on Shakespeare's foundation. In 1724, for the benefit of a deceased officer in the army, he wrote several papers in the manner of the *Spectator*, in conjunction with Mr. William Bond, &c., entitled the *Plain Dealer*; which were, some time after, published in two volumes octavo. In 1728 he made a journey into the north of Scotland, where he had been about two years before, having contracted with the York-buildings Company for the timber of many woods of great extent in that kingdom, for the use of the navy. He found some difficulties in this affair; for when the trees were, by his order, chained together into floats, the Highlanders refused to venture themselves on them down the Spey, till he first went himself to convince them there was no danger. This project, however, like the former, came to nothing; upon which Mr. Hill, after a stay of several months in the Highlands, quitted Scotland, and went to York. In his retirement in the North, he wrote a poem called *The Progress of Wit*, "being a caveat for the use of an eminent writer." This was intended for Mr. Pope, who, it seems, had been the aggressor in the *Dunciad*; and the character of whom in this piece, just, elegant, and severe, made the querulous assailant very uneasy. Much about the same time he wrote another poem, called *Advice to the Poets*, against the misapplication of poetry; and in 1731 appeared his tragedy of *Ethelwold*.

Of Mr. Hill's poetry and prose, four volumes were published after his death; but they are in no great favour with the public. His last production was a tragedy called *Merope*, which was brought upon the stage for his benefit.

Mr. Hill died February the 8th, 1749, as it is said, in the very minute of the earthquake, after enduring a twelvemonth's torment of body with great calmness and resignation. He was interred in the great cloister of Westminster Abbey.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

(1686-1757.)

"The personal history of Allan Ramsay," writes Campbell, "is marked by few circumstances of striking interest; yet, independently of his poetry, he cannot be reckoned an insignificant individual who gave Scotland her first circulating library, and who established her first regular theatre." Allan Ramsay, who, somehow or other, traced his descent paternally from the Douglas family, was born in 1686 at Crawford Moor, in Lanarkshire, where his father had charge of Lord Hopetoun's lead-mines. The father dying early, Allan was apprenticed, after cursory education at a parish school, to a wig-maker; but leaving the occupation ere he had begun it on his own account, that is, at the close of his apprenticeship, he married at the age of twenty-four, and then set about making a livelihood. His first mode of effecting this expedient object was to publish his own poetical productions in a cheap form; and he was so successful in this, that he had to invoke the aid of the law to protect him from piracy. He then set up as a regular bookseller and publisher; and among his early adventures in this way, sent forth a new edition of King James's *Christ Kirk on the Green*, with two cantos of his own subjoined: a passage in one of which, describing a husband fascinated homewards from a scene of drunkenness by the gentle persuasion of his wife, was selected as a subject for his pencil by Wilkie.

In 1724 he published a collection of popular Scottish songs, under the title of *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, which speedily ran through twelve editions; and *The Evergreen*, a selection of ancient poems from the Bannatyne MSS., which, however, the editor has polished up somewhat more than he was justified in doing, and among which he has inserted one (if not more) composition of his own, *The Vision*, the intrinsic merits of which might have well induced him to send it forth in his own name.

In 1726 appeared *The Gentle Shepherd*, one of the most pleasing pastorals in any language, and which, bearing the author's reputation beyond his own country, acquired for him the admiration of Pope and the personal friendship of Gay, who, when in Edinburgh, spent much of his time in Ramsay's shop, which overlooked the Exchange. In 1728 appeared a second volume of poems; and in 1730 our author sent forth a collection of fables.

The most remarkable circumstance of his life, as has been intimated, was an attempt he made to establish a theatre in Edinburgh. Our poet, writes Campbell, had been always fond of the drama, and



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GAY AND ALLAN RAMSAY IN THE WIG-MAKER'S SHOP AT EDINBURGH.

Campbell, "visionary as the idea of Scotland's independence as a kingdom might be, we must all of us excuse it in a poet whose fancy was expressed, and whose reputation was bound up, in a dialect from which the Union took away the last chance of perpetuity."

THOMAS TICKELL.*

(1686-1740.)

Thomas Tickell, the son of the Reverend Richard Tickell, was born in 1686 at Bridekirk, in Cumberland; and in April 1701 became a member of Queen's College in Oxford; in 1708 he was made master of arts, and two years afterwards was chosen fellow; for which, as he did not comply with the statutes by taking orders, he obtained a dispensation from the crown. He held his fellowship till 1726, and then vacated it, by marrying in that year at Dublin.

Tickell was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in closets; he entered early into the world, and was long busy in public affairs; in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison, whose notice he is said to have gained by his verses in praise of Rosamond.

To those verses it would not have been just to deny regard; for they contain some of the most elegant encomiastic strains; and, among the innumerable poems of the same kind, it will be hard to find one with which they need to fear a comparison. It may deserve observation, that, when Pope wrote long afterwards in praise of Addison, he has copied, at least has resembled, Tickell.

"Let joy salute fair Rosamonda's shade,
And wreaths of myrtle crown the lovely maid.
While now, perhaps, with Dido's ghost she roves,
And hears and tells the story of their loves,
Alike they mourn, alike they bless their fate,
Since love, which made them wretched, made them great.
Nor longer that relentless doors bemoan,
Which gain'd a Virgil and an Addison."

TICKELL.

"Then future ages with delight shall see
How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's looks agree;
Or in fair series laurell'd bards be shown,
A Virgil there, and here an Addison."

POPE.

He produced another piece of the same kind at the appearance of *Cato*, with equal skill, but not equal happiness.

When the ministers of Queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell published *The Prospect of Peace*, a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the nation from the pride of conquest to the

* Johnson.

pleasures of tranquillity. How far Tickell, whom Swift afterwards mentioned as Whiggissimus, had then connected himself with any party, I know not; this poem certainly did not flatter the practices or promote the opinions of the men by whom he was afterwards befriended.

Mr. Addison, however he hated the men then in power, suffered his friendship to prevail over his public spirit; and gave in the *Spectator* such praises of Tickell's poem, that when, after having long wished to peruse it, I laid hold on it at last, I thought it unequal to the honours which it had received, and found it a piece to be approved rather than admired. But the hope excited by a work of genius, being general and indefinite, is rarely gratified. It was read at that time with so much favour, that six editions were sold.



THOMAS TICKELL.

At the arrival of King George he sung *The Royal Progress*; which, being inserted in the *Spectator*, is well known; and of which it is just to say, that it is neither high nor low.

The poetical incident of most importance in Tickell's life was his publication of the first book of the *Iliad*, as translated by himself; an apparent opposition to Pope's *Homer*, of which the first part made its entrance into the world at the same time.

Addison declared that the rival versions were both good, but that Tickell's was the best that ever was made; and with Addison, the wits, his adherents and followers, were certain to concur. Pope does

not appear to have been much dismayed; "for," says he, "I have the town, that is, the mob, on my side." But he remarks, "that it is common for the smaller party to make up in diligence what they want in numbers; he appeals to the people as his proper judges; and if they are not inclined to condemn him, he is in little care about the high-flyers at Button's."

Pope did not long think Addison an impartial judge; for he considered him as the writer of Tickell's version. The reasons for his suspicion I will literally transcribe from Mr. Spence's collection.

"There had been a coldness (said Mr. Pope) between Mr. Addison and me for some time; and we had not been in company together for a good while any where but at Button's coffee-house, where I used to see him almost every day. On his meeting me there one day in particular, he took me aside, and said he should be glad to dine with me at such a tavern, if I stayed till those people were gone (Budgell and Philips). We went accordingly; and after dinner Mr. Addison said, 'That he had wanted for some time to talk with me; that his friend Tickell had formerly, whilst at Oxford, translated the first book of the *Iliad*; that he designed to print it, and had desired him to look it over; that he must therefore beg that I would not desire him to look over my first book, because if he did, it would have the air of double-dealing.' I assured him that I did not at all take it ill of Mr. Tickell, that he was going to publish his translation; that he certainly had as much right to translate any author as myself; and that publishing both was entering on a fair stage. I then added, that I would not desire him to look over my first book of the *Iliad*, because he had looked over Mr. Tickell's; but could wish to have the benefit of his observations on the second, which I had then finished, and which Mr. Tickell had not touched upon. Accordingly I sent him the second book the next morning; and Mr. Addison a few days after returned it, with very high commendations. Soon after it was generally known that Mr. Tickell was publishing the first book of the *Iliad*, I met Dr. Young in the street; and upon our falling into that subject, the doctor expressed a great deal of surprise at Tickell's having had such a translation so long by him. He said, that it was inconceivable to him, and that there must be some mistake in the matter; that each used to communicate to the other whatever verses they wrote, even to the least things; that Tickell could not have been busied in so long a work there without his knowing something of the matter, and that he had never heard a single word of it till on this occasion. The surprise of Dr. Young, together with what Steele has said against Tickell in relation to this affair, make it highly probable that there was some underhand dealing in that business; and indeed Tickell himself, who is a very fair worthy man, has since in a manner as good as owned it to me. When it was introduced into a conversation between Mr. Tickell and Mr. Pope, by a third person, Tickell did not deny it; which, considering his honour and zeal for his departed friend, was the same as owning it."

Upon these suspicions, with which Dr. Warburton hints that other circumstances concurred, Pope always, in his *Art of Sinking*, quotes this book as the work of Addison.

To compare the two translations would be tedious; the palm is

now given universally to Pope: but I think the first lines of Tickell's were rather to be preferred; and Pope seems to have since borrowed something from them in the correction of his own.

When the Hanover succession was disputed, Tickell gave what assistance his pen would supply. His *Letter to Avignon* stands high among party-poems; it expresses contempt without coarseness, and superiority without insolence. It had the success which it deserved, being five times printed.

He was now intimately united to Mr. Addison, who, when he went into Ireland as secretary to the Lord Sunderland, took him thither and employed him in public business; and when (1717) afterwards he rose to be secretary of state, made him under-secretary. Their friendship seems to have continued without abatement; for, when Addison died, he left him the charge of publishing his works, with a solemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To these works he prefixed an elegy on the author, which could owe none of its beauties to the assistance which might be suspected to have strengthened or embellished his earlier compositions; but neither he nor Addison ever produced nobler lines than are contained in the third and fourth paragraphs; nor is a more sublime or more elegant funeral-poem to be found in the whole compass of English literature.

He was afterwards (about 1725) made secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, a place of great honour; in which he continued till 1740, when he died on the twenty-third of April at Bath.

Of the poems yet unmentioned, the longest is *Kensington Gardens*, of which the versification is smooth and elegant, but the fiction unskillfully compounded of Grecian deities and Gothic fairies. Neither species of those exploded beings could have done much; and when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell, however, cannot be refused a high place among the minor poets; nor should it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors to the *Spectator*. With respect to his personal character, he is said to have been a man of gay conversation, at least a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domestic relations without censure.

THOMAS WARTON THE ELDER.

(1687-1745.)

Thomas Warton, born at Godalming in Surrey, 1687, studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, and became vicar of Basingstoke and Cobham, and twice professor of poetry at his University. A volume of his poems was published after his death by his eldest son, Joseph. It includes a few pieces in blank verse, written in a very good style of dignity and ease.

DANIEL BELLAMY.

(1687-1775.)

This gentleman was the son of opulent parents; but the unfortunate issue of the South-Sea scheme obliged him to turn those talents, which were intended for the ornament, towards the support of life, and he devoted more than half a century to writing for the public. As examples of that virtuous levity of heart, of which no adverse circumstances can deprive those who early and assiduously cultivate the means of preserving it, the fables of the *City Mouse and the Country Mouse*, and of the *Dog and the Shadow*, written in the mad year 1720, at which time our author was so deeply engaged in the South-Sea scheme that he there lost his lands and sunk his fortune, are conspicuous. From the account in the *Biographia Dramatica*, it would appear that our author's wife kept a school for young ladies at Chelsea, and wrote various dramatic trifles for "breaking-up" performance by the pupils, which were published in two vols. in 1746. Mr. Bellamy died Feb. 6, 1775, aged 88.

WILLIAM MESTON.

(1688-1745.)

William Meston was born in the parish of Widmar in Aberdeenshire. He received a liberal education at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, and was for some time one of the teachers in the high school of that city. He removed from that situation to be preceptor to the youth who was afterwards the celebrated Marshal Keith; and by the interest of the family was appointed professor of philosophy in the Marischal College. On the breaking out of the rebellion of 1715, he followed the fortunes of his misguided patrons, who made him governor of Dunoth Castle. After the battle of Sheriff Muir till the act of indemnity was passed, he lurked with a few fugitive associates, for whose amusement he wrote several of the burlesque poems to which he gave the title of *Mother Grim's Tales*. Not being restored to his professorship, he lived for some time on the hospitality of the Countess of Marshall; and after her death established an academy successively at Elgin and Perth, in both which places he failed, apparently from habits of careless expense and conviviality. The Countess of Elgin supported him during the decline of his latter days, till he removed to Aberdeen, where he died of a languishing distemper. He is said to have been a man of wit and pleasantry in conversation, and of considerable attainments in classical and mathematical knowledge.



ALEXANDER POPE.*

(1688-1744.)

* Alexander Pope was born in London,† May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained : we are informed that they were of "gentle blood;" that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head; and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esq. of York, who had likewise three sons: one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles I.; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to show what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the exchange was never discovered, till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linen-draper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shown remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life;‡ but

* Johnson.

† In Lombard-street, according to Dr. Warton.

‡ This weakness was so great that he constantly wore stays, as I have been assured by a waterman at Twickenham, who, in lifting him into his boat, had often felt them. His method of taking the air on the water was to have a sedan-chair in the boat, in which he sat with the glasses down.

* December 17, 1744.

in the ...

the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice, when he was young, was so pleasing, that he was called in fondness "the little nightingale."

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogilby's *Homer* and Sandys' *Ovid*. Ogilby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the *Iliad*, that English poetry owed much of its beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was considerable, he was removed to a school at Twyford, near Winchester; and again to another school about Hyde-park Corner, from which he used sometimes to stroll to the playhouse; and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's *Iliad*, with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his schoolfellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Ajax.

At the two last schools he used to represent himself as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him; and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the *Metamorphoses*. If he kept the same proportion in his other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss was great.

He tells of himself, in his poems, that "he lisp'd in numbers;" and used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of fiction it might have been said of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle "the bees swarmed about his mouth."

About the time of the Revolution, his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of Popish prosperity, quitted his trade, and retired to Binfield in Windsor Forest, with about 20,000*l.*; for which, being conscientiously determined not to intrust it to the government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expenses required; and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old; and there he had for a few months the assistance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of Tully's *Offices*. How Mr. Deane could spend, with a boy who had translated so much of *Ovid*, some months over a small part of Tully's *Offices*, it is now vain to inquire.

Of a youth so successfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally desired; but curiosity must be contented with confused, imperfect, and sometimes im-

probable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself; and at twelve formed a plan of study, which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say, "these are good rhymes."



POPE'S SEAT AT BINFIELD.

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model to be studied; and was impressed with such veneration for his instructor, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve; so early must he therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his *Ode on Solitude*, written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at the same age.

His time was now wholly spent in reading and writing. As he read the classics, he amused himself with translating them; and at fourteen made a version of the first book of *The Thebais*, which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been at

this time, if he had no help, a considerable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's fables, which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put *January and May*, and the *Prologue of the Wife of Bath*, into modern English. He translated likewise the *Epistle of Sappho to Phaon*, from Ovid, to complete the version which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed.

He sometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen his poem upon *Silence*, after Rochester's *Nothing*. He had now formed his versification, and the smoothness of his numbers surpassed his original: but this is a small part of his praise; he discovers such acquaintance both with human life and public affairs, as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in Windsor Forest.

Next year he was desirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with modern languages; and removed for a time to London, that he might study French and Italian, which, as he desired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application soon dispatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much use in his subsequent studies.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epic poem, with panegyrics on all the princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, "thought himself the greatest genius that ever was." Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings. He, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed. *Aloander*, the epic poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of St. Genevieve. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies, it is related, that he translated Tully on *Old Age*; and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read Temple's *Essays* and Locke on *Human Understanding*. His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious; for his early pieces show, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleased with himself easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbull, who had been ambassador at Constantinople and secretary of state, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance; and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for, from his first entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen, the life of Pope as an author may be properly computed. He now wrote his pastorals, which were shown to the poets and critics of that time : as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree ; they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope are distinguished among the English poets by the early exertion of their powers ; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley ; a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice ; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself ; and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision ; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted ; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular, but that he used to ride a-hunting in a tie-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism ; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now and then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of Statius into his hands for correction.

Their correspondence afforded the public its first knowledge of Pope's epistolary powers ; for his letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas, and she many years afterwards sold them to Curll, who inserted them in a volume of his *Miscellanies*.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the pastorals, and from him Pope received the counsel by which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of fame ; and being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy,—a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet ; and thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russell-street in Covent-garden,

where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent and insatiably curious: wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another; and when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of this time he desired only to know, and in the second he endeavoured to judge.

The pastorals, which had been for some time handed about among poets and critics, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's *Miscellany*, in a volume which began with the pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope.

The same year was written the *Essay on Criticism*; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards; and being praised by Addison in the *Spectator** with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he says, "found himself attacked, without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person instead of his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune; and not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity."

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions: whether the *Essay* will succeed? and who or what is the author?

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be "young and raw."

"First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts and affects the dictatorial air, he plainly

* No. 253. But, according to Dr. Warton, Pope was displeased at one passage, in which Addison censures the admission of "some strokes of ill-nature."

shows that at the same time he is under the rod ; and while he pretends to give laws to others, is a pedantic slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like school-boys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, he is almost perpetually in the wrong."

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks ; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages in these lines :

"There are whom Heaven has bless'd with store of wit,
Yet want as much again to manage it ;
For wit and judgment ever are at strife."

It is apparent that wit has two meanings ; and that what is wanted, though called wit, is truly judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right ; but not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. "By the way, what rare numbers are here ! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of impotence from some superannuated sinner ; and, having been p—xed by her former spouse, has got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnable ?" This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called "bulls." The first edition had this line,

"What is this wit—
Where wanted, scorn'd ; and envied where acquired ?"

"How," says the critic, "can wit be scorned where it is not ? Is not this a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land ? The person that wants this wit may indeed be scorned ; but the scorn shows the honour which the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper use, by correcting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis's criticism ; it remains that justice be done to his delicacy. "For his acquaintance (says Dennis) he names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means the qualification which this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critic, it being very certain that he was, like this essayer, a very indifferent poet ; he loved to be well-dressed ; and I remember a little young gentleman whom Mr. Walsh used to take into his company, as a double foil to his person and capacity. Inquire, between Sunning-hill and Oakingham, for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the God of Love, and tell me whether he be a proper author to make personal reflections. He may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern ; for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day. Let the person of a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous ; it being impossible that his outward form,

though it be that of downright monkey, should differ so much from human shape, as his unthinking, immaterial part does from human understanding." Thus began the hostility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was suspended for a short time, never was appeased. Pope seems at first to have attacked him wantonly; but, though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him very often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this Essay, Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because "not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it." The gentlemen and the education of that time seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thousand copies as a numerous impression.

Dennis was not his only censurer: the zealous papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Erasmus too studiously praised; but to these objections he had not much regard.

The Essay has been translated into French by Hamilton, author of the *Comte de Grammont*, whose version was never printed; by Robotham, secretary to the king for Hanover; and by Resnel; and commented by Dr. Warburton, who has discovered in it such order and connection as was not perceived by Addison, nor, as is said, intended by the author.

Almost every poem consisting of precepts is so far arbitrary and immethodical, that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may easily give a reason. "It is possible," says Hooker, "that, by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred." Of all homogeneous truths, at least of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever series they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, such as, when it is once shown, shall appear natural; but if this order be reversed, another mode of connection equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming fortitude first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practised; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed prudence and justice before it: since without prudence, fortitude is mad; without justice, it is mischievous.

As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where there is no obscurity, it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the *Spectator* was published *The Messiah*, which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms.

It is reasonable to infer from his letters, that the *Verses on the Unfortunate Lady* were written about the time when his Essay was published. The lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless inquiry.

I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an uncle, who, having given her a proper education, expected,

like other guardians, that she should make at least an equal match ; and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition.

Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows ; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance ; till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she bribed a woman servant to procure her a sword, which she directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raise the lady's character, it does not appear that she had any claim to praise, nor much to compassion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long ; the hour of liberty and choice would have come in time. But her desires were too hot for delay ; and she liked self-murder better than suspense. Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as "a false guardian : " he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed ; he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after, he wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions ; occasioned by a frolic of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being secretary to King James's queen, had followed his mistress into France, and who, being the author of *Sir Solomon Single*, a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a wit, solicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letters, C——l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended lady, who liked it well enough to show it ; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired, the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness, that, in the character of Sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true, I have some doubt ; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour ; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison *merum sal*. Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement ; and, having

luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was "a delicious little thing," and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for, as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. *The Rape of the Lock* stands forward, in the class of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shown before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence. Those performances which strike with wonder are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the public was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published *The Temple of Fame*, which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent motion as exhibited by sculpture.

Of the epistle from *Eloisa to Abelard* I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's *Nut-brown Maid*. How much he has surpassed Prior's work it is not necessary to mention, when perhaps it may be said with justice that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it.

In the next year (1713) he published *Windsor Forest*; of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his pastorals; and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins we are not told. The lines relating to the peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is said that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are always spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of *Windsor Forest*? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite: for having been consulted in the revival of *Cato*, he introduced it by a prologue; and when Dennis published his remarks, undertook, not indeed to vindicate, but to revenge his friend, by a *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*. There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for, says Pope, in a letter to him, "indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but I felt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against myself (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry)." Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in *The Guardian* the ironical comparison between the pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper, lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of painting with that of poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-sighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter; he tried, however, how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield;* if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier, for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastic verses to Jervas, which certainly show his power as a poet; but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem;

* It is still at Caen Wood.

and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's prologues and one of his tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds if he would show them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment; and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books.

He therefore resolved to try how far the favour of the public extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the *Iliad*, with large notes.

To print by subscription was for some time a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work for which this expedient was employed is said to have been Dryden's *Virgil*;* and it had been tried again with great success when the *Tatlers* were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the public with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who had delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes, he offered an English *Iliad* to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received; and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original; but proposed no means by which he might live without it. Addison recommended caution and moderation; and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be universally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor on condition of supplying at his own expense all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

* Earlier than this, viz. in 1688, Milton's *Paradise Lost* had been published with great success by subscription, in folio, under the patronage of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Somers.

Of the quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner, and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume: books so little inferior to the quartos, that by a fraud of trade, those folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom; were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in folio, for two guineas a volume; of the small folio, having printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in the other volumes to a thousand.

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English *Iliad* was printed in Holland in duodecimo, and imported clandestinely, for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his folio at once into a duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but indeed great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronised his subscription, began to be frightened at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy, had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, "that somebody would hang him."

This misery, however, was not of long continuance: he grew, by degrees, more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions; and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as dispatching regularly fifty verses a day; which would show him, by an easy computation, the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him, defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor; and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles because he had contributed to *The Guardian*, which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politics were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer. To these he made no public

opposition, but in one of his letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient, he sought assistance; and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute inquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs; on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling originally with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produces ambiguity in diction and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed, that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that, from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the music of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of Eobanus Hessus, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of La Valterie and Dacier; and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogilby. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodise but more was necessary: many pages were to be filled; and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities; and he was doubtless most readily employed, who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator "in part upon the *Iliad*;" and it appears from Fenton's letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted. Another

man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third, that was recommended by Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: "I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the 17th book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen: if the rest come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order."

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the *Iliad*, with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year; and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The *Iliad*, containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been dispatched in less than three hundred and twenty days, by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text.

According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may seem to have been slow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose that as much as has been done to-day may be done to-morrow; but on the morrow some difficulty emerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have overrated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and seventy-five. The copies for which subscriptions were given were six hundred and fifty-four; and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For these copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings, without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for public employment, but never proposed a pension. While the translation of Homer was in its progress, Mr. Craggs,

then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English *Iliad*. It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen ; and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of learning.

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the *Iliad*, which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now, by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty, repositied in the Museum.

¹ Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit first the printed lines ; then, in a smaller print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print which are given in italics, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the first book stands thus:

**"The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing;
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain."**

"The stern Pelides' rage, O Goddess, sing,
wrath
Of all the woes of Greece the fatal spring ;
Grecian
That strew'd with warriors dead the Phrygian plain,
heroes
And peopled the dark hell with heroes slain."
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

“ Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore;
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove :
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.”

"To all he sued; but chief implo'd for grace
The brother-kings of Atreus' royal race:
*Ye sons of Atreus, may your vows be crown'd,
kings and warriors*
Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours crown'd,
So may the Gods your arms with conquest bless,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
Till laid
And crown your labours with deserv'd success;
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore!"

"But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again;
If mercy fail, yet let my present move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove."

"But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain,
And give my daughter to these arms again;
Receive my gifts; if mercy fails, yet let my present move,
And fear the God that deals his darts around."
avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

"The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent declare,
The priest to reverence, and release the fair.
Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride,
Repuls'd the sacred sire, and thus replied."

"He said, the Greeks their joint assent declare,
The father said, the gen'rous Greeks relent,
T' accept the ransom, and release the fair.
Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent:
Not so the tyrant; he, with kingly pride,
Atrides

Repuls'd the sacred sire, and thus replied."

[Not so the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first book, I am told that there was yet a former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the second book varies very little from the printed page, and is therefore set down without a parallel; the few differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

"Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye:
Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie;
Th' Immortals slumber'd on their thrones above,
All but the ever-watchful eye of Jove.
To honour Thetis' son he bends his care,
And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war;
Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight,
And thus *commands* the vision of the night:

directs

Fly hence, delusive dream, and, light as air,
To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;
Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train,
March all his legions to the dusty plain.
Now tell the king 'tis giv'n him to destroy
Declare ev'n now
The lofty *walls* of wide-extended Troy:

tow'rs

For now no more the Gods with fate contend;
At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end;
Destruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,
hangs

And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall."

Invocation to the catalogue of ships.

" Say, Virgins, seated round the throne divine,
 All-knowing Goddesses! immortal Nine!
 Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeasur'd height,
 And hell's abyss, hide nothing from your sight,
 (We, wretched mortals! lost in doubts below,
 But guess by rumour, and but boast we know);
 Oh, say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of fame,
 Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction came!
 To count them all, demands a thousand tongues,
 A throat of brass, and adamantine lungs."

" Now, Virgin Goddesses! immortal Nine!
 That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,
 Who see through heaven and earth, and hell profound,
 And all things know, and all things can resound!
 Relate what armies sought the Trojan land,
 What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command
 (For doubtful Fame distracts mankind below,
 And nothing can we tell, and nothing know):
 Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,
 A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues were vain."

Book V. v. 1.

" But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
 Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires;
 Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,
 And crown her hero with distinguish'd praise.
 High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
 His beamy shield emits a living ray;
 Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
 Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies."

" But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
 Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her fires;
 force

O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raise,
 Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to raise,
 his deathless

And crown her hero with *immortal* praise:
 distinguish'd

Bright from his beamy *crest* the lightnings play,
 High on helm

From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray;
 High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
 His beamy shield emits a living ray;
 The Goddess with her breath the flames supplies,
 Bright as the star whose fires in autumn rise;
 Her breath divine thick streaming flames supplies,
 Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies:
 Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
 Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies."

" When first he rears his radiant orb to sight,
 And bath'd in Ocean, shoots a keener light;
 Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd,
 Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd:

Onward she drives him, furious to engage
Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage."

"When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And gilds old Ocean with a blaze of light;
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies,
Fresh from the deep, and gilds the seas and skies;
Such glories Pallas on her chief bestow'd,
Such sparkling rays from his bright armour flow'd,
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd;
Onward she drives him *headlong* to engage,

furious

Where the *war bleeds*, and where the *fiercest* rage."
fight burns, thickest

"The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;
In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,
The sons to toils of glorious battle bred."

"There liv'd a Trojan, Dares was his name,
The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame.
The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault."

Conclusion of Book VIII. v. 687.

"As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;—
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field;
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn."

"As when in stillness of the silent night,
As when the moon in all her lustre bright;
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's *clear* azure *sheds* her *silver* light;
pure spreads sacred
As still in air the trembling lustre stood,
And o'er its golden border shoots a flood;

When *no loose gale* disturbs the deep serene,
 not a breath
 And *no dim cloud* o'ercasts the solemn scene ;
 not a
 Around her silver throne the planets glow,
 And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow ;
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole ;
 Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,
 o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds,
 O'er the dark trees a yellower *green* they shed,
 gleam
 verdure
 And tip with silver all the *mountain* heads,
 forest
 And tip with silver every mountain's head.
 The valleys open, and the forests rise,
 The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise,
 Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
 All nature stands reveal'd before our eyes ;
 A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.
 The conscious shepherd, joyful at the sight,
 Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.
 The conscious *swains*, *rejoicing at the sight*,
 shepherds, gazing with delight,
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the *vivid* light.
 glorious
 useful
 So many flames before the *navy* blaze,
 proud Ilion
 And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays :
 Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,
 And tip the distant spires with fainter beams ;
 The long reflections of the distant fires
 Gild the high walls, and tremble on the spires ;
 Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires ;
 A thousand fires at distant stations bright,
 Gild the dark prospect, and dispel the night."

Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a greater number : but most other readers are already tired ; and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers.

The *Iliad* was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded : the first four books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high ; and every man who had connected his name with criticism or poetry was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topic. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearsal Pope afterwards gave the following account :

"The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really possessed of it. When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the *Iliad*, that lord desired to have the

pleasure of hearing them read at his house. Addison, Congreve, and Garth were there at the reading. In four or five places Lord Halifax stopped me very civilly, and with a speech each time of much the same kind: 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope; but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me. Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your leisure. I am sure you can give it a little turn.' I returned from Lord Halifax's with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and as we were going along, was saying to the doctor, that my lord had laid me under a great deal of difficulty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking over the passages almost ever since, and could not guess at what it was that offended his lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at my embarrassment; said I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Halifax to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about looking those places over and over when I got home. 'All you need do (says he) is to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Halifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.' I followed his advice; waited on Lord Halifax some time after; said I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed; read them to him exactly as they were at first; and his lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, 'Ay, now they are perfectly right: nothing can be better.'

It is seldom that the great or the wise suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single letter (December 1, 1714), in which Pope says, "I am obliged to you both for the favours you have done me, and those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory, when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome or solicitous, it must not be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your lordship may cause me to live agreeably in the town or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is indeed a high strain of generosity in you to think of making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to divert you some few hours; but if I may have leave to add, it is because you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better reason; for I must of consequence be very much (as I sincerely am) yours, &c."

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude; and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be "troublesome out of gratitude, not expectation." Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence; and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other; and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that

Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible to themselves; and the process is continued by petty provocations and incivilities, sometimes peevishly returned and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of these two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, "nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge."

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his prologue to *Cato*, by his abuse of Dennis, and with praise yet more direct by his poem on the *Dialogues on Medals*, of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened; and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously or insidiously quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many; and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the proposals for the *Iliad*, the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas, the painter, once pleased himself (August 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. "But," says he, "as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and seems to have no very just one in regard to me, so I must own to you I expect nothing but civility from him." In the same letter he mentions Philips as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but in a letter to Addison he expresses some consciousness of behaviour inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

"November 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from every body but me, who, I confess, could not but despise him. When I came to the ante-chamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as master of requests. Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he must have them all subscribe; for, says he, the author shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankness and spirit, as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity; and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said, that he, being now engaged in public business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation, nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that he should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the public.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependence, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the public cost; and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of Homer was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first *Iliad* (for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them) was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference; and the critics and poets divided into factions. "I," says Pope, "have the town, that is, the mob, on my side; but it is not uncommon for the smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers. I appeal to the people as my rightful judges; and while they are not inclined to condemn me, shall not fear the highflyers at Button's." This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written; and sometimes said that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of Homer.

Pope was now sufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared and fairly estimated. This design seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended, at another time, a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation; and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But while he was thus meditating defence

or revenge, his adversary sank before him without a blow : the voice of the public was not long divided, and the preference was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself ; but if he knew it in Addison's lifetime, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope :

"Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses and conversations ; and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr. Addison ; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us ; and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and had given him ten guineas after they were published. The next day, while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his ; that if I was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should be not in such a dirty way ; that I should rather tell him himself fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities ; and that it should be something in the following manner. I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly ever after."

The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances ; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verses mention ; and being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it with fossil bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto, a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun ; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden ; and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amusements seem frivolous and childish : whether it be that men conscious of great reputation think themselves above the reach of censure, and

safe in the admission of negligent indulgences ; or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder ; like him who, having followed



POPE'S VILLA.

with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch.

While the volumes of his *Homer* were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a preface, written with great sprightliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted : other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had published and of what he had suppressed.

In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the *Iliad* was at last completed in 1720. The splendour and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities. Burnet, who was afterwards a judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called *Homerides* before it was published. Duckett likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But whoever his critics were, their writings are lost ; and the names which are preserved are preserved in the *Dunciad*.

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and for awhile he thought himself the lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long; and he seems to have waked soon enough to get clear with the loss of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise.

He gave the same year (1721) an edition of Shakespeare. His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakespeare's plays in six quarto volumes: nor did his expectation much deceive him; for, of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed. The reputation of that edition indeed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first in a book called *Shakespeare Restored*, and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied, by the desire of humbling a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collaters, commentators, and verbal critics; and hoped to persuade the world that he miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his preface he expanded with great skill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakespeare by Dryden; and he drew the public attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the *Iliad*, resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the *Odyssey*, in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour; being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of saying that he had "translated" the *Odyssey*, as he had said of the *Iliad*, he says that he had "under-

taken" a translation; and in the proposals the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of "two of his friends who have assisted him in this work."

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study of the popish controversy, in hope of his conversion; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles or his judgment. In questions and projects of learning they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domestic life and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude: "perhaps," says he, "it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester." At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a Bible.*

Of the *Odyssey* Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The public was carefully kept ignorant of the several shares; and an account was subjoined at the conclusion, which is now known not to be true.

The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the *Iliad*; and the latter books of the *Iliad* less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the same as for the *Iliad*, except that only 100*l.* were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers was five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725; and from that time he resolved to make no more translations.

The sale did not answer Lintot's expectation; and he then pretended to discover something of fraud in Pope, and commenced or threatened a suit in Chancery.

On the English *Odyssey* a criticism was published by Spence, at that time prelector of poetry at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just: what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity.

With this criticism Pope was so little offended, that he sought

* This Bible was afterwards used in the chapel of Prior Park. Dr. Warburton probably presented it to Mr. Allen.

the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful; and he obtained very valuable preferments in the church.

Not long after, Pope was returning home from a visit in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death, when the postilion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a letter of consolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness, that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.

He soon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of miscellanies, in which, amongst other things, he inserted the *Memoirs of a Parish Clerk*, in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own history; and a *Debate upon Black and White Horses*, written in all the formalities of a legal process, by the assistance, as is said, of Mr. Fortescue, afterwards Master of the Rolls. Before these miscellanies is a preface signed by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantic complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and sale of their papers. He tells, in tragic strains, how "the cabinets of the sick and the closets of the dead have been broken open and ransacked;" as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and essays were in danger, where gold and diamonds are safe. A cat hunted for his musk is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers.

His complaint, however, received some attestation; for the same year the letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell in his youth were sold by Mrs. Thomas to Curll, who printed them.

In these miscellanies was first published the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, which, by such a train of consequences as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion for the *Dunciad*.

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and showed his satirical powers by publishing the *Dunciad*, one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves.

At the head of the dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude; but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised Shakespeare more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unnecessarily interposing in the

quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and slow : the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common readers. Many of the allusions required illustration ; the names were often expressed only by the initial and final letters ; and, if they had been printed at length, were such as few had known or recollected. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting ; for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribbler was a dunce ? If, therefore, it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the *Dunciad* might have made its way very slowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected. Every man is of importance to himself, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others ; and, supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is perhaps the first to publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unless related by himself, and at which those that hear them will only laugh ; for no man sympathises with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the *Dunciad* is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a dedication which he wrote to Lord Middlesex in the name of Savage.

" I will relate the war of the *Dunces* (for so it has been commonly called), which began in the year 1727, and ended in 1730.

" When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the preface to their miscellanies, to publish such little pieces of theirs as had casually got abroad, there was added to them the *Treatise of the Bathos*, or the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*. It happened that, in one chapter of this piece, the several species of bad poets were ranged in classes, to which were prefixed almost all the letters of the alphabet (the greatest part of them at random) : but such was the number of poets eminent in that art, that some one or other took every letter to himself : all fell into so violent a fury, that, for half a year or more, the common newspapers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehood and scurrilities they could possibly devise ; a liberty no way to be wondered at in those people, and in those papers, that, for many years during the uncontrolled license of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age ; and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure.

" This gave Mr. Pope the thought, that he had now some opportunity of doing good, by detecting and dragging into light these common enemies of mankind ; since, to invalidate this universal slander, it sufficed to show what contemptible men were the authors of it. He was not without hopes that, by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to recommend them, either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the *Dunciad* ; and he

thought it an happiness, that by the late flood of slander on himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their names as was necessary to this design.

"On the 12th of March, 1729, at St. James's, that poem was presented to the king and queen (who had before been pleased to read it) by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole; and, some days after, the whole impression was taken and dispersed by several noble-men and persons of the first distinction.

"It is certainly a true observation, that no people are so impatient of censure as those who are the greatest slanderers, which was wonderfully exemplified on this occasion. On the day the book was first vended, a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the *Dunciad*: on the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public? There was no stopping a current with a finger; so out it came.

"Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The *Dunces* (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs, to consult of hostilities against the author: one wrote a letter to a great minister, assuring him Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy; with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted.

"Some false editions of the book, having an owl in their frontispiece, the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in his stead an ass laden with authors. Then, another surreptitious one being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass; by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of the *Dunciad*."

Pope appears by this narrative to have contemplated his victory over the *Dunces* with great exultation; and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for a while his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot, however, be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor: for nobody believes that the letters in the *Bathos* were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the king and queen by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which, by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters, of those whom he had satirised, was made intelligible and diverting. The

critics had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decipher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appeased by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon *The Rape of the Lock*. Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with "pious passion," pretended that his moral character was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him, by changing "pious passion" to "cordial friendship;" and by a note, in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologise; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The Dunciad, in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part were written by Dr. Arbuthnot; and an apologetical letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on *Taste*, in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said, to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of 1000*l.*, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of the 1000*l.* Pope publicly denied; but, from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind dissimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory letter to the duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, "owns that such critics can intimidate him, nay almost persuade him to write no more; which is a compliment this age deserves." The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. "There is nothing," says Juvenal, "that a man will not believe in his own favour." Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him entreated and implored; and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible; and when, therefore, the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death; for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three; but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame; and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some inquiry, was a publication of letters between him and many of his friends, which, falling into the hands of Curll, a rapacious bookseller of no good fame, were by him printed and sold. This volume containing some letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege; and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curll appeared at the bar, and, knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence: "He has," said Curll, "a knack at versifying; but in prose I think myself a match for him." When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed: Curll went away triumphant, and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence; that he asked no name and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorised to use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the transaction it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected; and when, some years afterwards, I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the

same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them public, that they were sent at once to two booksellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey, and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them public was the only purpose may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers showed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression.

It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that, when he could complain that his Letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence; the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some Letters which a very good or a very wise man would wish suppressed; but as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From the perusal of those Letters Mr. Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost.

This, however, Pope did not accept; but in time solicited a subscription for a quarto volume, which appeared (1737), I believe, with sufficient profit. In the preface he tells, that his Letters were deposited in a friend's library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the public for such an incident; and to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll.

When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters, being either private or literary, were little known or little regarded, they awakened no popular kindness or resentment; the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as a contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did not talk of it. Not much, therefore, was added by it to fame or envy; nor do I remember that it produced either public praise or public censure.

It had however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty; our language had few Letters except those of statesmen. Howel, indeed, about a century ago, published his letters, which are com-

mended by Morhoff, and which alone, of his hundred volumes, continue his memory. Loveday's letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips' (Orinda's) are equally neglected. And those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival living or dead.

Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison; but it must be remembered that he had the power of favouring himself; he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived or most diligently laboured, and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial* in his productions than the rest, except one long letter by Bolingbroke, composed with the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift, perhaps, like a man who remembered he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot, like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind.

Before these letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of ethics, under the title of *An Essay on Man*; which, if his letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open, and doubtless many secret enemies. The *Dunces* were yet smarting with the war; and the superiority which he publicly arrogated, disposed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Those friends of Pope that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With these precautions, 1733, was published the first part of the *Essay on Man*. There had been for some time a report that Pope

* These letters were evidently prepared for the press by Pope himself.

was busy upon a system of morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. When the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder, but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied.

The subsequent editions of the first epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend

"Expatiate freely o'er this scene of man,
A mighty maze of walks without a plan."

For which he wrote afterwards,

"A mighty maze, but not without a plan."

for, if there were no plan, it were in vain to describe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of these lines :

"And spite of pride, and in thy reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right ;"

but having afterwards discovered, or been shown, that the "truth" which subsisted "in spite of reason" could not be very "clear," he substituted

"And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite."

To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The second and third epistles were published, and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the conclusion, it is sufficiently acknowledged that the doctrine of the *Essay on Man* was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, has been reported, but can hardly be true. The essay plainly appears the fabric of a poet; what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles: the order, illustration, and embellishments must all be Pope's.

These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined: philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers, and the essay abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired, with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspecting, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into

French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of logic, and his *Examen de Pyrrhonisme*; and however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure.

His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and therefore it was not long before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him a haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or modify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves: his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A letter was produced when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, "Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton out of pride, and Addison out of modesty." And when Theobald published Shakespeare in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion, and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be supposed that his union with Pope

was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted and dismissed without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the *Essay on Man*, in the literary journal of that time called *The Republic of Letters*.

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender, the following letter evidently shows:

“ April 11, 1732.

“SIR,—I have just received from Mr. R. two more of your letters. It is in the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this: but I cannot help thanking you in particular for your third letter, which is so extremely clear, short, and full, that I think Mr. Crousaz ought never to have another answer, and deserved not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too much honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems; for you have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I meant just what you explain; but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself; but you express me better than I could express myself. Pray accept the sincerest acknowledgments. I cannot but wish these letters were put together in one book, and intend (with your leave) to procure a translation of part at least, or of all of them, into French; but I shall not proceed a step without your consent and opinion, &c.”

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him, without his own consent, an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged, with his eyes open, on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion.

From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he in-

troduced him to Mr. Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn; and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishopric. When he died, he left him the property of his works, a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand pounds.

Pope's fondness for the *Essay on Man* appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's *Solomon*, was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was for that purpose some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished, and by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of *Paradise Lost*. Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should turn his essay into Latin prose, but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time among the great, with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French minister an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness.

It was said that when the court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths, and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swift, who represents him as "refusing the visits of a queen," because he knew that what had never been offered had never been refused.

Besides the general system of morality supposed to be contained in the *Essay on Man*, it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life, one of which is the epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) *On the Use of Riches*, a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed.

Into this poem some hints are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrl, the Man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his public works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from five hundred a year. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrl was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the minister of the place; and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man, being made more credible, may be more solid.

Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shown to be possible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with some indignation the inscription on the Monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea, for he calls that an "Epistle to Bathurst," in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his *Characters of Men*, written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the ruling passion, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object; an innate affection, which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propensity.

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance: he who is at one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of money. Those indeed who attain any excellence, commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendent planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must at least be allowed that this ruling passion, antecedent to reason and observation, must have an object independent of human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money, for he may be born where money does not exist; nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country, for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature: and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country is possible only to those whom inquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false; its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or overruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his ruling passion.

Pope has formed his theory with so little skill, that in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the *Characters of Men* he added soon after, in an epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the *Characters of Women*. This poem,

which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the public was informed by an advertisement that it contained no character drawn from the life; an assertion which Pope probably did not expect nor wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them in a note that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was vice too high to be yet exposed.

The time, however, soon came, in which it was safe to display the Duchess of Marlborough under the name of Atossa; and her character was inserted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740) imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once, as was suspected, without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarised, by adapting their sentiments to modern topics, by making Horace say of Shakespeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester; at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it farther than any former poet.

He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's *Satires*, which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the public. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's address *à son esprit*, was published in January 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliance of wit; a wit who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the public. He vindicates himself from censures; and with dignity rather than arrogance enforces his own claims to kindness and respect.

Into this poem are interwoven several paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the satirical lines upon

Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,

“ Who would not smile if such a man there be ?
Who would not laugh if Addison were he ? ”

Then,

“ Who would not grieve if such a man there be ?
Who would not laugh if Addison were he ? ”

At last it is,

“ Who but must laugh if such a man there be ?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he ? ”

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the ministry ; and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets,* had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps, cannot now be easily known : he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls, “ Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure ; ” and hints that his father was a hatter. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose ; the verses are in this poem ; and the prose, though it never was sent, is printed among his letters ; but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last satires, of the general kind, were two dialogues, named, from the year in which they were published, *Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight*. In these poems many are praised, and many reproached. Pope was then entangled in the opposition ; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and a friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shown : he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending through much more violent conflicts of faction.

In the first dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses “ low-born Allen.” Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into “ humble Allen.”

In the second dialogue he took some liberty with one of the Foxes, among others ; which Fox, in a reply to Lyttleton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called *Manners*, together with Dodsley, his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and

* Entitled *Sedition and Defamation displayed*, 8vo, 1733.

† On a hint from Warburton. There is, however, reason to think from the appearance of the house in which Allen was born, at St. Blaise, that he was not of a low but of a decayed family.

escaped ; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed ; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation, is imputed by his commentator to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money ; he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment ; till at last he began to think he should be more safe if he were less busy.

The *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the "Scriblerus Club." Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious life of an infatuated scholar. They were dispersed ; the design was never completed ; and Warburton laments its miscarriage as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented ; for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known ; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned : he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt.

For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind ; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality ; for, besides its general resemblance to *Don Quixote*, there will be found in it particular imitations of the *History of Mr. Oufle*.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his *Travels* ; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers ; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small selection from the Italians, who wrote in Latin, had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man* who concealed his name, but whom his preface shows to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books,

* Since discovered to have been Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester.

which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid; the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured.

He did not sink into idleness: he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his *Essay on Man*, of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift:

“ March 25, 1736.

“ If ever I write any more epistles in verse, one of them shall be addressed to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to say, more finished than any of the rest. The subject is large, and will divide into four epistles, which naturally follow the *Essay on Man*; viz. 1. Of the extent and limits of human reason and science; 2. A view of the useful and therefore attainable, and of the unuseful and therefore unattainable, arts; 3. Of the nature, ends, application, and use, of different capacities; 4. Of the use of learning, of the science of the world, and of wit. It will conclude with a satire against the misapplication of all these, exemplified by pictures, characters, and examples.”

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the *Dunciad*, of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the imitations of *Horace* he has liberally enough praised the *Careless Husband*. In the *Dunciad*, among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his *Apology*, complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, “because,” says he, “I never have offended him.”

It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollified by this submissive gentleness; but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his satires, and again in his epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the *Dunciad* attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the laureate, he satirised those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great.

The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution from that time never to

bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the *Three Hours after Marriage* had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played Bayes in the *Rehearsal*; and as it had been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a mummy and a crocodile. "This," says he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of "a wit out of his senses;" to which he replied, "that he would take no other notice of what was said by so particular a man, than to declare that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation."

He shows his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expense of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody inquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity.

He should, therefore, have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shown as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain.

But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and, to show that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the *Dunciad*,* in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily, the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the old pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put

* In 1748.

into the *Dunciad*; but he had the fate of Cassandra. I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpie, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the *Dunciad* with another pamphlet,* which, Pope said, "would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him;" but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate, that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, "These things are my diversion." They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

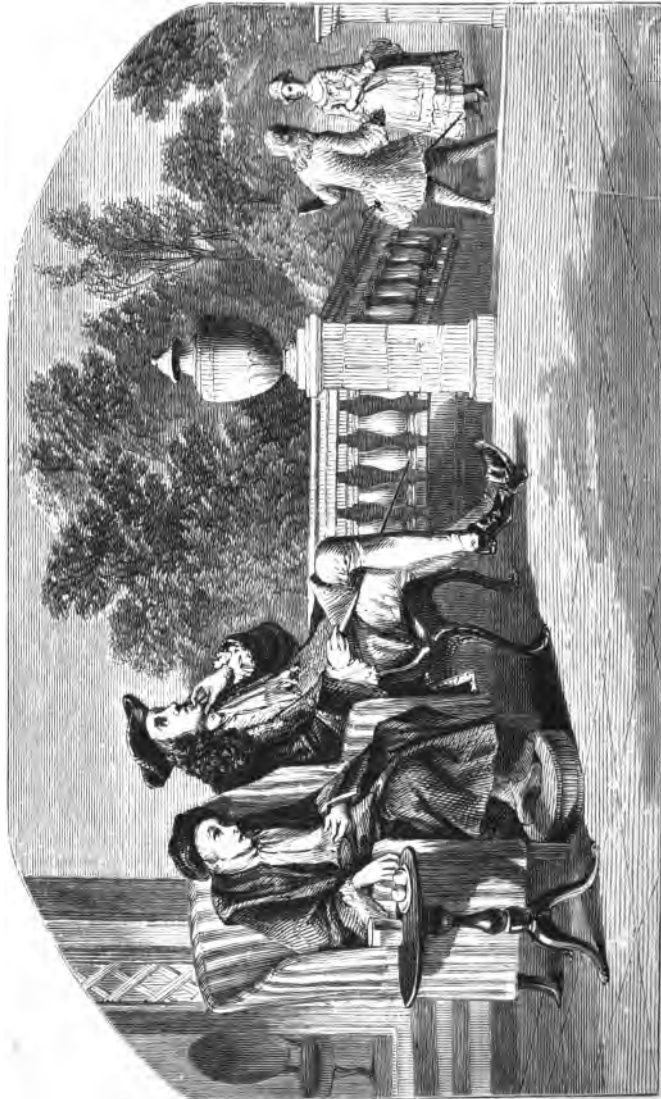
From this time, finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revision and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his epic poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject, therefore, was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead; by which it appears that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he places them.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, "going down the hill." He had for at least five years been afflicted with asthma and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the ter-

* In 1744.



race, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the lady, who, when he came to her, asked, "What, is he not dead yet?" She is said to have neglected him, with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet of the little which he had to leave, she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation, therefore, was endearing; for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience; or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault: and if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May 1744 his death was approaching: * on the sixth he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, "It has so." And added, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind." At another time he said, "I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than—". His grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, "I do not think it is essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it."

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said, "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship; and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue."

He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors: first to Lord Bolingbroke; † and, if he should not be living, to the Earl of March-

* Spence.

† This is somewhat inaccurately expressed. Lord Bolingbroke was not an executor: Pope's papers were left to him specifically, or, in case of his death, to Lord Marchmont.

mont: undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time, Dodsley, the bookseller, went to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and, whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was "reserved for the next age."

He lost, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called *The Patriot King* had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed, according to the author's direction, among his friends, and Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print and retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped: the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance incited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action,—for breach of trust has always something criminal,—but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he inquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shown to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice, for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself would be useless.

Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in *A Letter to the most impudent Man living*.

He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she

parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcilable dislike; and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness, as to refuse any legacy from Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or perhaps, with the prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the hospital at Bath; observing that Pope was always a bad accountant; and that, if to 150*l.* he had put a cipher more, he had come nearer to the truth.

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the "Little Club," compared himself to a spider; and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing; and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a "long disease." His most frequent assailment was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold; so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of a very coarse warm linen, with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodices made of stiff canvass, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced; and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford privately in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valitudinarian man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

*"C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant."*

When he wanted to sleep, he "nodded in company;" and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave, procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant; and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another; because he exacted the attention and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night; and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber, he was very burdensome: but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared that, in the house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by the javelin or the sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life, will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six-and-fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." If at the house of his friends he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." His unjustifiable impression of *The Patriot King*, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable

that so near his time so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection, raised against his inscription for Shakespeare, was defended by the authority of "Patrick," he replied: "Horresco referens"—that "he would allow the publisher of a dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why; and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was, indeed, infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no entreaties be restrained from contradicting him; till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want; and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony; such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad*, by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved: or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment; as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table, and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all."

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner; and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year; of which, however, he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.*

Of this fortune, which, as it arose from public approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full; it would be hard to find a man so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his letters and in his poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he re-

* Part of it arose from an annuity of two hundred pounds a year, which he had purchased either of the late Duke of Buckinghamshire, or the duchess his mother; and which was charged on some estate of that family.

proaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitations in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion, not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set his genius to sale; he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage, however, remarked that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his "Highness's dog."

His admiration of the great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the "golden age," and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect: but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude; and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind: but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the

prejudices and partialities are known ; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations which men give of their own minds with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right ; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy ; to despise death, when there is no danger ; to glow with benevolence, when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed, they are felt ; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge, and another to solicit the imagination because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with affectation and ambition : to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation ; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed ; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry ? He writes, he says, when " he has just nothing else to do ;" yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he had " always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose ; and Lord Oxford's domestic related, that in the dreadful winter of '40, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism ; though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation ; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that " he never sees courts." Yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy ; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness, " How he could love a prince while he disliked kings ?"

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention ; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed ? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease ? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge ; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just ; and if it were

just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper : he was sufficiently *a fool to fame* ; and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his letters ; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the great is too often repeated to be real ; no man thinks much of that which he despises ; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the post-office should know his secrets ; he has many enemies ; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy : "after many deaths and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases ;" and they can live together, and "show what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand : he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites ; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to inquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere ; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered, with great propriety, that Pope had not yet acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must have been some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference,—he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind ; and if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness ; he was irritable and resentful ; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous and then hated for being angry, continued too long.

Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money; but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant: his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself; and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance, to be used if any provocation should be ever given. About this I inquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which, in his correspondence with Racine, he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority and so little moderation would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated; those who could not deny that he was excellent would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was, in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and when he wrote his *Essay on Criticism*, had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite

volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality; not from the copies of authors, but the originals of nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his *Essay on Man*, when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, "More than I expected." His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, show an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent; eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen and what to be rejected; and in the works of others, what was to be shunned and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditations suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought or perhaps an expression more happy than was common rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion; and some little fragments have been found, containing lines or parts of lines to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure; he was never elevated to negligence nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation; and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But, what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic; he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarcely ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song; and derived no opportunities from recent events, or any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birth-day, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were, for the same reason, never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection; it is at least certain that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration if it be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismissal of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judg-

ment that he had. He wrote and professed to write merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best; he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader; and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication were the two satires of *Thirty-eight*; of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the *Iliad*, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the *Essay on Criticism* received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had, perhaps, the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose: but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities,

and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates;—the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more, for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry may, perhaps, show him the reasonableness of my determination.

The works of Pope are now to be distinctly examined; not so much with attention to slight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience; and, exhibiting only the simple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep inquiry. Pope's *Pastorals* are not, however, composed but with close thought; they have reference to the times of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the Zephyrs are made to lament in silence.

To charge these pastorals with want of invention, is to require what was never intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to show his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen, not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language and skill in metre to exhibit a series of versification, which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation.

The design of *Windsor Forest* is evidently derived from *Cooper's Hill*, with some attention to Waller's poem on *The Park*; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his master in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, or a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems; because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shown must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspicion, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader.

But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of *Windsor Forest* which deserve least praise are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene,—the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of Lodona. Addison had in his *Campaign* derided the rivers that “rise from their oozy beds” to tell stories of heroes; and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural, but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient: nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The *Temple of Fame* has, as Steele warmly declared, “a thousand beauties.” Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected and learnedly displayed: yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice; but is turned silently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the *Messiah* excels the *Pollio* is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.

The *Verses on the Unfortunate Lady* have drawn much attention, by the illaudible singularity of treating suicide with respect; and they must be allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the lady or her guardian. History relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the uncle to detestation for his pride: the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an uncle, but never by his pride. On such an occasion a poet may be allowed to be obscure; but inconsistency never can be right.*

* The unfortunate lady's name was Withinbury, corruptly pronounced Winbury. She was in love with Pope, and would have married him; her guardian, though she was deformed in person, looking upon such a match as beneath her, sent her to a convent; and a noose, not a sword, put an end to her life.

The *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* was undertaken at the desire of Steele. In this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried; yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden, for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.

But the odes want the essential constituent of metrical compositions, the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alleged that Pindar is said by Horace to have written *numeris lege solutis*; but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed; and perhaps the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticisms upon a Greek exercise, which Cobb had presented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at last, "Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one."

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds,—well chosen indeed, but only sounds.

The second consists of hyperbolical commonplaces, easily to be found, and perhaps without much difficulty to be as well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, can be found: the poet, however, faithfully attends us; we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail, without better matter?

The last stanza recurs again to commonplaces. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault: the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts: Pope, with all this labour in the praise of music, was ignorant of its principles and insensible of its effects.

One of his greatest, though of his earliest works, is the *Essay on Criticism*, which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition,—selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be so soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the essay would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to observe, that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with the journey of a traveller

in the Alps, is perhaps the best that English poetry can show. A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must show it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity: but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. In didactic poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praised which illustrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroics, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which, having no parallels, served only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called "comparisons with a long tail." In their similes the greatest writers have sometimes failed. The ship-race compared with the chariot-race is neither illustrated nor aggrandised; land and water make all the difference. When Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of pursuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer; and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage by a hare and dog. The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewise dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph in which it is directed that "the sound should seem an echo to the sense;" a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this representation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *thump, rattle, growl, hiss*. These, however, are but few, and the poet cannot make them more; nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was, in the dactylic measures of the learned languages, capable of considerable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration; and different degrees of motion were perhaps expressed by verses rapid or slow, without much attention of the writer, when the image had full possession of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and a *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some sort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of their most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus:

" With many a weary step, and many a groan,
Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;
The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground."

Who does not perceive the stone to move slowly upward, and roll violently back ? But set the same numbers to another sense :

" While many a merry tale, and many a song,
Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long.
The rough road then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our impatient steps ; for all was fairy ground."

We have now surely lost much of the delay and much of the rapidity.

But, to show how little the greatest master of numbers can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be sufficient to remark, that the poet who tells us that

" When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow :
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main ;"—

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praise of Camilla's lightness of foot, tried another experiment upon sound and time, and produced this memorable triplet :

" Waller was smooth ; but Dryden taught to join }
The varying verse, the full resounding line, }
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race, and the march of slow-paced majesty, exhibited by the same poet in the same sequence of syllables, except that the exact prosodist will find the line of swiftness by one time longer than that of tardiness.

Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied ; and when real, are technical and nugatory,—not to be rejected, and not to be solicited.

To the praises which have been accumulated on the *Rape of the Lock* by readers of every class, from the critic to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now inquired from what sources the power of pleasing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention ; we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana. The employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own absurdity ; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions ; when the phantom is put in motion, it dissolves : thus discord may raise a mutiny, but discord cannot conduct a march nor besiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The sylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table what more terrific and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean or the field of battle ; they give their proper help and do their proper mischief.

Pope is said, by an objector, not to have been the inventor of

this petty nation; a charge which might with more justice have been brought against the author of the *Iliad*, who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there, but the names of his agents, which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

In this work are exhibited in a very high degree the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits; loves a sylph, and detests a gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced, that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded: yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us, invested with so much art of decoration, that though nothing is disguised, every thing is striking; and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.

The purpose of the poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at "the little unguarded follies of the female sex." It is therefore without justice that Dennis charges the *Rape of the Lock* with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the *Lutrin*, which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but if they had both succeeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from public gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous; that, by all the bustle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither hastened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose; and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewise be charged with want of connection; the game at ombre might be spared; but if the lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those, perhaps, are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence!

The *Epistle of Eloise to Abelard* is one of the most happy productions of human wit; the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most

deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloise were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection, for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supersedes invention; and imagination ranges at full liberty, without struggling into scenes of fable.

The story thus skilfully adopted has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revisal. Here is particularly observable the *curiosa felicitas*, a fruitful soil and careful cultivation. Here is no crudeness of sense nor asperity of language.

The sources from which sentiments which have so much vigour and efficacy have been drawn, are shown to be the mystic writers by the learned author of the *Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope*; a book which teaches how the brow of criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the *Iliad*, a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks translation was almost unknown; it was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourse to the barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless perhaps Anguilara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The *Iliad* of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantic; and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject it with disgust.

Their predecessors, the Romans, have left some specimens of translations behind them; and that employment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged: but unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the wisdom of the ancients, but found themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer; and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope searched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art, that he has left in his Homer a treasure of poetical elegances to posterity. His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers,

has wanted melody. Such a series of lines, so elaborately corrected and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the public ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by some who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homeric; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristic manner of the Father of Poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty.* This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that *necessitas quod cogit defendit*,—that may be lawfully done which cannot be forborne. Time and place will always enforce regard. In estimating this translation, consideration must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabric with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed passages, very few can be shown which he has not embellished.

There is a time when nations, emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leisure to grow wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure: but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, in the progress of learning, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another; and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English *Iliad*, when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer, doubtless, owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expense of dignity. A hero would wish to be loved, as well as to be revered.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient: the purpose of a

* Bentley was one of these. He and Pope, soon after the publication of Homer, met at Dr. Mead's at dinner; when Pope, desirous of his opinion of the translation, addressed him thus: "Dr. Bentley, I ordered my bookseller to send you your books; I hope you received them." Bentley, who had purposely avoided saying any thing about Homer, pretended not to understand him, and asked, "Books! books! what books?" "My Homer," replied Pope, "which you did me the honour to subscribe for." "Oh," said Bentley, "ay, now I recollect—your translation: it is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope; but you must not call it Homer."

writer is to be read; and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, those of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has, however, been objected with sufficient reason, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the ladies; and the ease which is so carefully preserved is sometimes the ease of a trifle. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style: the gravity of common critics may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the *Odyssey* nothing remains to be observed; the same general praise may be given to both translations; and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to imitate his master.

Of the *Dunciad*, the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified, as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire, ludicrously pompous.

That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his Shakespeare, and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and therefore it was necessary to find other enemies with other names, at whose expense he might divert the public.

In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or deformity are not culpable in themselves, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprehension, what should restrain them? *impune diem consumpserit ingens Telephus*; and upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire, which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam.

All truth is valuable; and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment: he that refines the public taste is a public benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the grossness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the ex-

cellence of other passages ; such as the formation and dissolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the misfortune of the Florist, and the crowded thoughts and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

The *Essay on Man* was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry ; and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject ; metaphysical morality was to him a new study ; he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because infinite excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that these beings must be "somewhere ;" and that "all the question is, whether man be in a wrong place." Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitzian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place because he has it. Supreme wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by *somewhere* and *place*, and *wrong place*, it had been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself ; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension,—an opinion not very uncommon ; and that there is a chain of subordinate beings "from infinite to nothing," of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which without his help he supposes unattainable, in the position, "that though we are fools, yet God is wise."

This essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing ; and, when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the essay, disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover ? That we are, in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant ; that we do not uphold the chain of existence ; and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more : that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals ; that, if the world be made for man, it may be said that man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new : that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord ; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits ; that evil is sometimes balanced by good ; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration and doubtful effect ; that our true honour is, not to have a great part, but to act it well ; that virtue only is our own ; and that happiness is always in our power.

Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before; but it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishments, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure.

This is true of many paragraphs; yet, if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the *Essay on Man*; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will easily be found in all his other works.

The *Characters of Men and Women* are the product of diligent speculation upon human life; much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his *Characters of Women* with Boileau's Satire; it will then be seen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated, and female excellence selected; and he surely is no mean writer to whom Boileau should be found inferior. The *Characters of Men*, however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many passages exquisitely beautiful. The *Gem and the Flower* will not easily be equalled. In the women's part are some defects: the character of Atossa is not so neatly finished as that of Clodio; and some of the female characters may be found perhaps more frequently among men; what is said of Philomede was true of Prior.

In the Epistles to Lord Bathurst and Lord Burlington, Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and, to support his hypothesis, has printed that first which was published last. In one, the most valuable passage is perhaps the elegy on good sense; and the other, the end of the Duke of Buckingham.

The Epistle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called *The Prologue to the Satires*, is a performance consisting, as it seems, of many fragments wrought into one design, which by this union of scattered beauties contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than self-defence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity, than the poet's vindication of his own character. The meanest passage is the satire upon Sporus.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called *The Epilogue to the Satires*, it was very justly remarked by Savage, that the second was in the whole more strongly conceived and more equally supported, but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of vice, and the celebration of the triumph of corruption.

The imitations of Horace seem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the sentiments of an old author to

recent facts or familiar images : but what is easy is seldom excellent ; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers ; the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel ; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and parti-coloured ; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern.*

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had invention, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in the *Rape of the Lock* ; and by which extrinsic and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the *Essay on Criticism*. He had imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader, the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his *Eloisa*, *Windsor Forest*, and the *Ethic Epistles*. He had judgment, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality. And he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning. "Music," says Dryden, "is inarticulate poetry ;" among the excellences of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most perfect fabric of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best ; in consequence of which restraint his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception ; and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have

* In one of these poems is a couplet, to which belongs a story that I once heard the Rev. Dr. Ridley relate :

"Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage ;
Hard words, or hanging, if your judge be * * * *."

Sir Francis Page, a judge well known in his time, conceiving that his name was meant to fill up the blank, sent his clerk to Mr. Pope to complain of the insult. Pope told the young man that the blank might be supplied by many monosyllables other than the judge's name. "But, sir," said the clerk, "the judge says that no other word will make sense of the passage." "So then it seems," says Pope, "your master is not only a judge, but a poet ; as that is the case, the odds are against me. Give my respects to the judge, and tell him I will not contend with one that has the advantage of me, and he may fill up the blank as he pleases."

thought with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical; with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined, he contented himself, without regard to Swift's remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission at a small distance to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of alexandrines and triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; and always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in the *Rape of the Lock*.

Expletives he very early rejected from his verses; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the *Iliad* might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had perhaps infected him.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this:

"Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows
The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows."

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It is remarked by Watts, that there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shown him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

New sentiments and new images others may produce; but to attempt any farther improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet, otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer; though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him. If the writer of the *Iliad* were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius.

The following letter, of which the original is in the hands of

Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr. Jodrell :

" To Mr. Bridges, at the Bishop of London's, at Fulham.

" Sir,—The favour of your letter, with your remarks, can never be enough acknowledged ; and the speed with which you discharged so troublesome a task doubles the obligation.

" I must own you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed upon me ; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your censure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribbler to be improved in his judgment than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations from the Greek, which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes ; who are, it seems, as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decried for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have restored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of all formal explainers, in several hundred places ; and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer in Greek and Latin attributed so much to Hobbes, that they confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it ; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, overruled me. However, sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion ; for men (let them say what they will) never approve any other's sense, but as it squares with their own. But you have made me much more proud of, and positive in, my judgment, since it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and shall make my profit of them. To give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden's example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience from one who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty critics or commentators. But though I speak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up that way for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of invention and design, which are not at all confined to the language ; for the distinguishing excellences of Homer are (by the consent of the best critics of all nations) first in the manners (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words) ; and then in that rapture and fire which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force, that no man who has a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads him. Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at once ; whereas Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought principally to imitate ; and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason why all translations fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to renders them heavy and dispirited.

" The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, consists in

that noble simplicity which runs through all his works ; and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is at the same time very copious. I don't know how I have run into this pedantry in a letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately. What farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet ; which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity of proving how much I think myself obliged to your friendship, and how truly I am, sir,

“ Your most faithful, humble servant,

“ A. POPE.”

The criticism upon Pope's epitaphs, which was printed in *The Universal Visitor*, is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inserted in the life.

Every art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall therefore endeavour, at this visit, to entertain the young students in poetry with an examination of Pope's epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is useless ; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be composed in verse or prose. It is indeed commonly panegyrical, because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends ; but it has no rule to restrain or modify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

I.

On CHARLES EARL OF DORSET, in the Church of Wythyham, in Sussex.

“ Dorset, the grace of courts, the Muse's pride,
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, died.
The scourge of pride, though sanctified or great,
Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state ;
Yet soft in nature, though severe his lay,
His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.
Blest satirist ! who touch'd the means so true,
As show'd vice had his hate and pity too.
Blest courtier ! who could king and country please,
Yet sacred kept his friendships and his ease.
Bless'd peer ! his great forefathers' every grace
Reflecting, and reflected on his race ;
Where other Buckhursts, other Dorsets shine,
And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.”

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man for whom the tomb was erected died. There are indeed some qualities worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by “ judge of nature ” is not easy to say. Nature is not the object of human judgment ; for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant what is commonly called nature by the critics, a just representation of things really existing, and actions

really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed to art ; nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of art.

“ The scourge of pride.”

Of this couplet, the second line is not what is intended, an illustration of the former. Pride in the great is indeed well enough connected with knaves in state, though ‘ knaves ’ is a word rather too ludicrous and light ; but the mention of sanctified pride will not lead the thoughts to fops in learning, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

“ Yet soft his nature.”

This is a high compliment, but was not first bestowed on Dorset by Pope. The next verse is extremely beautiful.

“ Bless’d satirist !”

In this distich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame these imitations with much harshness ; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided ; and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own ; and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses his proper feather.

“ Bless’d courtier !”

Whether a courtier can properly be commended for keeping his ease sacred, may perhaps be disputable. To please king and country, without sacrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would attend a little more accurately to the use of the word ‘ sacred,’ which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher Being, or where some duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendship sacred, because promises of friendship are very awful ties ; but methinks he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease sacred.

“ Bless’d peer !”

The blessing ascribed to the *peer* has no connexion with his peerage : it might happen to any other man whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity are likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer or the man entombed.

II.

On Sir WILLIAM TRUMBULL, one of the principal Secretaries of State to King WILLIAM III., who, having resigned his place, died in his retirement at Easthampstead, in Berkshire, 1716.

“ A pleasing form ; a firm yet cautious mind ;
Sincere, though prudent ; constant, yet resign’d ;
Honour unchang’d, a principle profess’d,
Fix’d to one side, but moderate to the rest ;
An honest courtier, yet a patriot too ;
Just to his prince, and to his country true ;

Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
 A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
 A generous faith, from superstition free;
 A love to peace, and hate of tyranny:
 Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,
 At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd."

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the first view, a fault which I think scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead; and to what purpose is any thing told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a history of a nameless hero, are equally absurd; since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either are scattered at the mercy of fortune, to be appropriated by guests. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them; and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject. He said perhaps the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an honest courtier and a patriot; for an honest courtier cannot but be a patriot.

It was unsuitable to the nicety required in short compositions, to close his verse with the word 'too;' every rhyme should be a word of emphasis; nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excusable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the seventh line the word 'filled' is weak and prosaic, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

The thought in the last line is impertinent; having no connection with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conspirator* who died lately in prison, after a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved against him, the sentiment had been just and pathetic; but why should Trumbull be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known restraint?

III.

On the Hon. SIMON HARCOURT, only Son of the Lord Chancellor HARCOURT, at the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordshire, 1720.

"To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near:
 Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear;
 Who ne'er knew joy but friendship might divide,
 Or gave his father grief but when he died.
 How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!
 If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.
 Oh, let thy once-lov'd friend inscribe thy stone,
 And with a father's sorrows mix his own!"

* Major Bernardi, who died in Newgate, Sept. 20, 1736.

This epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must concur with genius; which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with servile imitation.

I cannot but wish that of this inscription the two last lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the sense.

IV.

On JAMES CRAGGS, Esq. in Westminster Abbey.

" JACOBS CRAGGS,
REGI MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ A SECRETIS
ET CONSILIIIS SANCTORIBVS,
PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPVLI AMOR ET DELICIE :
VIXIT TITVLIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR
ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV.
OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCLXX.

" Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear !
Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend ;
Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd,
Prais'd, and honour'd by the Muse he lov'd."

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and therefore some faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are torn from the poem that first contained them. We may, however, observe some defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet; it is superfluous to tell of him who was sincere, true, and faithful, that he was in honour clear.

There seems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the relation between the two positions, that he gained no title and lost no friend?

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be used; for no reason can be given why part of the information should be given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb, more than in any other place or any other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs.

V.

*Intended for Mr. ROWE, in Westminster Abbey.**

" Thy relics, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
And sacred, place by Dryden's awful dust :
Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,
To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.
Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest !
Bless'd in thy genius, in thy love too bless'd !

* This was altered much for the better as it now stands on the monument in the abbey, erected to Rowe and his daughter.—WARE.

One grateful woman to thy fame supplies
What a whole thankless land to his denies."

Of this inscription, the chief fault is that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it is written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and, indeed, gives very little information concerning either.

To wish "peace to thy shade" is too mythological to be admitted into a Christian temple. The ancient worship has infected almost all our other compositions, and might therefore be contented to spare our epitaphs. Let fiction at least cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

VI.

*On Mrs. CORBET, who died of a Cancer in her Breast.**

"Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Bless'd with plain reason and with sober sense;
No conquest she, but o'er herself, desir'd;
No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinc'd that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,
Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried;
The saint sustain'd it, but the woman died."

I have always considered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs. The subject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent peculiarities, yet that which really makes, though not the splendour, the felicity of life; and that which every wise man will choose for his final and lasting companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs, weary and disgusted, from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of such a character, which the dull overlook and the gay despise, it was fit that the value should be made known, and the dignity established. Domestic virtue, as it is exerted without great occasions or conspicuous consequences, in an even unnoted tenour, required the genius of Pope to display it in such a manner as might attract regard and enforce reverence. Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verses?—If the particular lines of this inscription be examined, it will appear less faulty than the rest. There is scarcely one line taken from commonplaces, unless it be that in which "only virtue" is said to be "our own." I once heard a lady of great beauty and elegance object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyric. Of this let the ladies judge.

VII.

On the Monument of the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY, and of his Sister MARY, erected by their Father the Lord DIGBY, in the church of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, 1727.

"Go, fair example of untainted youth,
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth;

* In the north aisle of the parish church of St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,
 Good without noise, without pretension great ;
 Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,
 Who knew no wish but what the world might hear ;
 Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
 Lover of peace, and friend of human kind :
 Go, live ! for heaven's eternal year is thine ;
 Go, and exalt thy moral to divine.

And thou, blest maid ! attendant on his doom,
 Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,
 Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,
 Not parted long, and now to part no more.
 Go, then, where only bliss sincere is known !
 Go where to love and to enjoy are one !

Yet take these tears, mortality's relief,
 And, till we share your joys, forgive our grief :
 These little rites, a stone, a verse receive ;
 'Tis all a father, all a friend can give."

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indiscriminate character, and of the sister tells nothing but that she died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer ; for the greater part of mankind have no character at all, have little that distinguishes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be said of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thousand more. It is indeed no great panegyric, that there is enclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year and died in another ; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent, which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are, however, not the proper subjects of poetry ; and whenever friendship, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The scantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs which he has written comprise about an hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought or word which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed from Dryden. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

VIII.

On Sir GODFREY KNELLER, in Westminster Abbey, 1723.

" Kneller, by Heaven, and not a master, taught,
 Whose art was nature, and whose pictures thought ;
 Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate
 What'e'r was beauteous or what'e'r was great,
 Lies crown'd with princes' honours, poets' lays,
 Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise.

Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie
Her works ; and dying, fears herself may die."

Of this epitaph, the first couplet is good, the second not bad ; the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word 'crowned' not being applicable to the 'honours' of the 'lays ;' and the fourth is not only borrowed from the epitaph on Raphael, but of a very harsh construction.

IX.

On General HENRY WITHERS, in Westminster Abbey, 1729.

" Here, Withers, rest ! thou bravest, gentlest mind,
Thy country's friend, but more of human kind,
O ! born to arms ! O ! worth in youth approv'd !
O ! soft humanity in age below'd !
For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear,
And the gay courtier feels the sigh sincere.
Withers, adieu ! yet not with thee remove
Thy martial spirit or thy social love !
Amidst corruption, luxury, and rage,
Still leave some ancient virtues to our age !
Nor let us say (those English glories gone),
The last true Briton lies beneath this stone."

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of common-places, though somewhat diversified by mingled qualities and the peculiarity of a profession.

The second couplet is abrupt, general, and displeasing. Exclamation seldom succeeds in our language ; and I think it may be observed, that the particle O ! used at the beginning of the sentence always offends.

The third couplet is more happy ; the value expressed for him by different sorts of men raises him to esteem : there is yet something of the common cant of superficial satirists, who suppose that the insincerity of a courtier destroys all his sensations, and that he is equally a dissembler to the living and the dead.

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should be unwilling to lose the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if they cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

X.

On Mr. ELIJAH FENTON, at Easthamstead in Berkshire, 1730.

" This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, ' Here lies an honest man !'
A poet, bless'd beyond the poet's fate,
Whom heaven kept sacred from the proud and great :
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life, and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear ;
From nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thank'd Heaven that he liv'd, and that he died."

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed from Crashaw. The four next lines contain a species of praise peculiar, original, and just.

Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and whatever criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

XI.

On Mr. GAY, in Westminster Abbey, 1732.

"Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit a man, simplicity a child;
With native humour tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age;
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted e'en among the great;
A safe companion and an easy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end:
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies GAY!"

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more successfully executed than the rest, for it will not always happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power; by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other; gentle manners and mild affections, if they mean any thing, must mean the same.

That Gay was a man in wit, is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The wit of man* and the simplicity of a child make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet rage is less properly introduced after the mention of mildness and gentleness, which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so mild and gentle to temper his rage was not difficult.

The next line is inharmonious in its sound, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious; and the word 'lash' used absolutely, and without any modification, is gross and improper.

To be above temptation in poverty, and free from corruption among the great, is indeed such a peculiarity as deserved notice; but to be a safe companion is a praise merely negative, arising not from possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and that one of the most odious.

* "Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child."

DRYDEN on Mrs. Killigrew.

As little can be added to his character by asserting that he was lamented in his end. Every man that dies is, at least by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented ; and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The first eight lines have no grammar ; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the worthy and the good, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it ; and so harsh when it is explained, that still fewer approve.

XII.

Intended for Sir ISAAC NEWTON, in Westminster Abbey.

“ ISAACUS NEWTONIUS :
 Quem Immortalem
 Testantur Tempus, Natura, Cælum :
 Mortalem
 Hoc marmor fatetur.
 Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night :
 God said, *Let Newton be !* and all was light.”

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults seem not to be very few. Why part should be Latin, and part English, it is not easy to discover. In the Latin the opposition of *immortalis* and *mortalis* is a mere sound, or a mere quibble ; he is not immortal in any sense contrary to that in which he is mortal.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words ‘night’ and ‘light’ are too nearly allied.

XIII.

On EDMUND Duke of BUCKINGHAM, who died in the 19th year of his age, 1735.

“ If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
 And every opening virtue blooming round,
 Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,
 Or add one patriot to a sinking state ;
 This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,
 Or sadly told how many hopes lie here !
 The living virtue now had shone approv'd,
 The senate heard him, and his country lov'd.
 Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame,
 Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham ;
 In whom a race for courage fam'd and art,
 Ends in the milder merit of the heart,
 And, chiefs or sages long to Britain given,
 Pays the last tribute of a saint to Heaven.”

This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the rest ; but I know not for what reason. To crown with reflection is surely a mode of speech approaching to nonsense. ‘Opening virtues blooming round’ is something like tautology. The six following lines are poor and prosaic. ‘Art’ is in another couplet used for ‘arts,’ that a rhyme may be had to ‘heart.’ The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deserve the notice

of criticism. The contemptible Dialogue between He and She should have been suppressed for the author's sake.

In his last epitaph on himself, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he confounds the living man with the dead :

" Under this stone, or under this sill,
Or under this turf, &c."

When a man is once buried, the question under what he is buried is easily decided. He forgot that, though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new; even this wretchedness seems to have been borrowed from the following tuneless lines :

" Ludovici Ariosti humanitur ossa
Sub hoc marmore, vel sub hac humo, seu
Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres
Sive hærede benignior comes, seu
Opportunus incidens Viator :
Nam scire haud potuit futura, sed nec
Tanti erat vacuum sibi cadaver
Ut urnam cuperet parare vivens,
Vivens ista tamen sibi paravit.
Quæ inscribi voluit suo sepulchro
Olim siquod haberet is sepulchrum."

Surely Ariosto did not venture to expect that his trifle would have ever had such an illustrious imitator.

JOHN GAY.*

(1688-1733.)

John Gay, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manor of Holdsworth in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation; and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk-mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The Duchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary. By quitting a shop for such service he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of inde-

* Johnson.

pendence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay, found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have re-



JOHN GAY.

ceived him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a playfellow rather than a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rustics in parts of England remote from London. Steele, in some papers of *The Guardian*, had praised Ambrose Philips as the pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write *The Shepherd's Week*, to show that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was

reasonable; but the pastorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with such imitation as they could obtain of obsolete language, and by consequence in a style that was never spoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded. These pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the stage, but it received no applause: he printed it, however; and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the public taste, he offered it again to the town; but, though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of Queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party: but the queen's death put an end to her favours; and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the house of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the Princess of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour, that both the prince and princess went to see his *What d' ye call it*, a kind of mock tragedy, in which the images were comic and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty; and was so much favoured by the audience, that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffin, a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called *The Key to What d' ye call it*; which, says Gay, "calls me a block-head, and Mr. Pope a knave."

But fortune has always been inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three Hours after Marriage*; a comedy written, as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally imply something more generally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others, is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers

strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the *What d' ye call it* would raise the fortune of its author; and finding nothing done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The Earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire; the year after Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year Lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, the two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his poems by subscription, with such success that he raised a thousand pounds, and called his friends to a consultation what use might be best made of it. Lewis, the steward of Lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest; Arbuthnot bade him to intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity.

Gay in that disastrous year* had a present from young Craggs of some South-Sea stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase a hundred a-year for life; "which," says Fenton, "will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost; and Gay sunk under the calamity so low, that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shown particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the Princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her ladies all in expectation; and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty japan screen. The princess started, the ladies screamed; and poor Gay, after all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives*, which was acted at Drury Lane in 1723-4, I know not;* but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of fables for the improvement of the young Duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the prince and princess became king and queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but upon the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman-usher to the Princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the queen that he was too old for the place. There seems to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour; and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards

* Spence.

† It was acted seven nights. The author's third night was by command of their royal highnesses.

Countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the king and queen, to engage her interest for his promotion: but solicitations, verses, and flatteries were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from the neglect—or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggars' Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of making Gay rich, and Rich gay.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

"Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty sort of a thing a Newgate pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time; but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan. This was what gave rise to the *Beggars' Opera*. He began on it; and when first he mentioned it to Swift, the doctor did not much like the project. As he carried it on, he showed what he wrote to both of us, and we now and then gave a correction, or a word or two of advice; but it was wholly of his own writing. When it was done, neither of us thought it would succeed. We showed it to Congreve; who, after reading it over, said it would either take greatly, or be damned confoundedly. We were all, at the first night of it, in great uncertainty of the event; till we were very much encouraged by overhearing the Duke of Argyle, who sat in the next box to us, say, 'It will do; it must do! I see it in the eyes of them.' This was a good while before the first act was over, and so gave us ease soon; for that duke (besides his own good taste) has a particular knack, as any one now living, in discovering the taste of the public. He was quite right in this, as usual; the good-nature of the audience appeared stronger and stronger every act, and ended in a clamour of applause."

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad*:

"This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of England; was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time, at Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made its progress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days successively. The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in fans, and houses were furnished with it in screens. The fame of it was not confined to the author only. The person who acted Polly, till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town; her pictures were engraved, and sold in great numbers; her life written, books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and jests. Furthermore, it drove out of England (for that season) the Italian opera, which had carried all before it for ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift com-

mended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece that "placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light;" but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said, that after the exhibition of the *Beggars' Opera*, the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the play-house, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Mackheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection, however, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second.

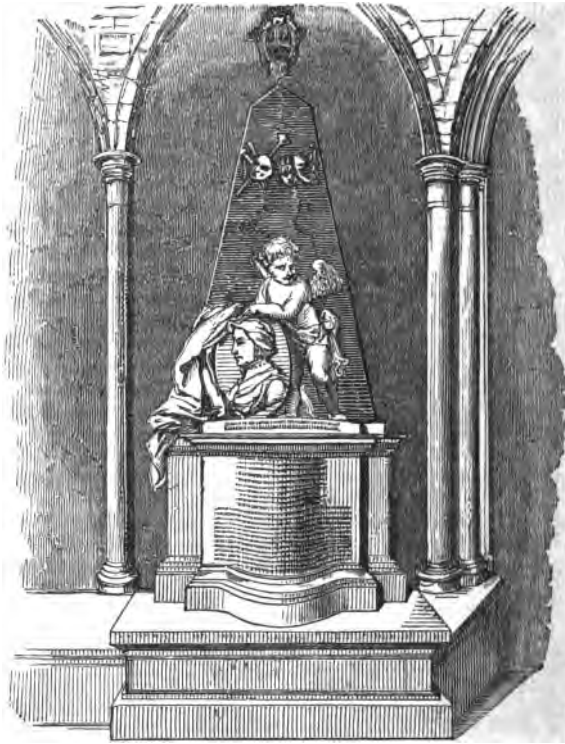
He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship in the affectionate attention of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The duke, considering his want of economy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual colic; and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December, 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was impressed with the preconception of some misfortune.

After his death was published a second volume of fables, more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered three thousand pounds. There have appeared likewise, under his name, a comedy called *The Distrest Wife*, and *The Rehearsal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope is this: that "he was a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it;" and that "he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great;" which caution, however, says Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard

a female critic remark, "of a lower order." He had not in any great degree the *mens divinator*, the dignity of genius. Much, however, must be allowed to the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the *ballad opera*; a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now, by the experience of half a century, been found



GAY'S MONUMENT.

so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgment or of luck, the praise must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, *The Rural Sports*, is such as was easily planned and executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent.

The *Fan* is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand, but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work ; for, having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *tales* ; and Gay both with *tales* and *allegorical prosopopæias*. A *fable*, or *apologue*, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, — *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, — are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a fable he gives now and then a tale, or an abstracted allegory ; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness ; the versification is smooth ; and the diction, though now and then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims ; it is sprightly, various, and pleasant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn ; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away. An honest blacksmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous ; a shoe-boy could have been produced by the casual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases ; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal ; and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions and on small the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood.

Of his little poems the public judgment seems to be right ; they are neither much esteemed nor totally despised. The story of the apparition is borrowed from one of the tales of Poggio. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion ; for who can much delight in the echo of unnatural fiction ?

Dione is a counterpart to *Amynta* and *Pastor Fido*, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event ; but the style of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the poetical Arcadia so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support its representation through a long work. A pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured ; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts ? Such scenes please barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life ; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise and nations grow learned.



JAMES SOMERVILLE.*

(1692-1742.)

Of Mr. Somerville's life I am not able to say any thing that can satisfy curiosity.

He was a gentleman whose estate was in Warwickshire ; his house, where he was born in 1692, is called Edston, a seat inherited from a long line of ancestors, for he was said to be of the first family in his county. He tells of himself that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Winchester School, and was elected fellow of New College. It does not appear that in the places of his education he exhibited any uncommon proofs of genius or literature. His powers were first displayed in the country, where he was distinguished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justice of the peace.

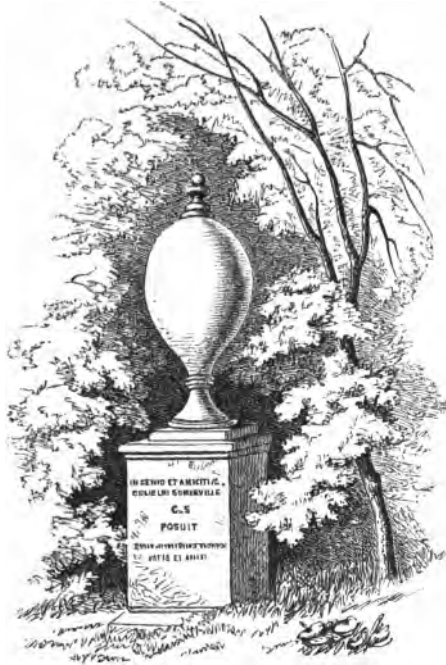
Of the close of his life, those whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following account, copied from the letters of his friend Shenstone, by whom he was too much resembled :

"Our old friend Somerville is dead ! I did not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find myself on this occasion : *sublatum querimus*. I can now excuse all his foibles ; impute them to age and to distress of circumstances : the last of these considerations wrings my very soul to think on. For a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at least in one production) generally pleased the world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches that are low in every sense ; to be forced to

* Johnson.

drink himself into pains of the body, in order to get rid of the pains of the mind,—is a misery.”*

He died July 19, 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henley-on-Arden.



SOMERVILLE'S TOMB.

His distresses need not be much pitied : his estate is said to have been fifteen hundred a year, which by his death devolved to Lord Somerville of Scotland. His mother indeed, who lived till ninety, had a jointure of six hundred.

It is with regret that I find myself not better enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer who at least must be allowed to have set a good example to men of his own class, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge ; and who has shown, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters.

* “ I loved Somerville,” adds Shenstone, in one of those happy sentences which, being once heard, are never forgotten, “ because he knew so perfectly well what belonged to the *focci-nauci-nihili*, *fulification* of money.”

Somerville has tried many modes of poetry ; and though perhaps he has not in any reached such excellence as to raise much envy, it may commonly be said at least, that " he writes very well for a gentleman." His serious pieces are sometimes elevated, and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verses to Addison, the couplet which mentions Clio is written with the most exquisite delicacy of praise ; it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are seldom attained. In his odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines ; but in the second ode he shows that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His subjects are commonly such as require no great depth of thought or energy of expression. His fables are generally stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential. In his tales there is too much coarseness, with too little care of language, and not sufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chase*, which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verse, of which, however, his two first lines gave a bad specimen. To this poem praise cannot be totally denied. He is allowed by sportsmen to write with great intelligence of his subject, which is the first requisite to excellence ; and though it is impossible to interest the common readers of verse in the dangers or pleasures of the chase, he has done all that transition and variety could easily effect, and has with great propriety enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting used in other countries.*

With still less judgment did he choose blank verse as the vehicle of *Rural Sports*. If blank verse be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled prose ; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them but absurd novelty, which, wanting the attractions of nature, cannot please long. One excellence of *The Splendid Shilling* is, that it is short. Disguise can gratify no longer than it deceives.

GILBERT WEST.†

(Circa 1680-1756.)

Gilbert West is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a sufficient account ; the intelligence which my inquiries have obtained is general and scanty.

He was the son of the Reverend Dr. West, prebendary of Westminster, he who published *Pindar* at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was sister to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham. His father,‡ purposing to educate him for the church, sent him first to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford ; but he

* "The *Chase* will preserve the writer's name and reputation when his other works are neglected ; for it is the production of a sportsman, a scholar, and a poet."

† Johnson.

‡ His uncle : his father died when he was twelve years old.

was seduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commission in a troop of horse, procured him by his uncle.

He continued some time in the army ; though it is reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere soldier, nor ever lost the love, or much neglected the pursuit, of learning ; and afterwards, finding himself more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the Lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to Lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit, for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession ; and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and settled himself in a very pleasant house at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself to learning



GILBERT WEST.

and to piety. Of his learning the late collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller if the dissertations which accompany his version of *Pindar* had not been improperly omitted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his *Observations on the Resurrection*, published in 1747, for which the University of Oxford created him a doctor of laws by diploma (March 30, 1748) ; and would doubtless have reached yet further, had he lived to complete, what he had for some time meditated, the *Evidences of the*

Truth of the New Testament. Perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read the prayers of the public liturgy every morning to his family; and that on Sunday evening he called his servants into the parlour, and read to them first a sermon and then prayers. Crashaw is now not the only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of *poet* and *saint*.

He was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his *Dissertation on St. Paul*.

These two illustrious friends had for a while listened to the blandishments of infidelity; and when West's book was published, it was bought by some who did not know his change of opinion, in expectation of new objections against Christianity; and as infidels do not want malignity, they revenged the disappointment by calling him a Methodist.

Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved: he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council (1752); and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed; nor could it secure him from the calamities of life: he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after (March 26) a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave might be without its terrors.

Of his translations I have only compared the first Olympic ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas; for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of versification. The first strophe is eminently happy; in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, "if thou, my soul, wishest to speak of games, look not in the desert sky for a planet hotter than the sun; nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia." He is sometimes too paraphrastical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet which, in one word, signifies *delighting in horses*; a word which, in the translation, generates these lines:

" Hiero's royal brows, whose care
Tends the courser's noble breed,
Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
Pleas'd to train the youthful steed."

Pindar says of Pelops, that "he came alone in the dark to the White Sea;" and West,

"Near the billow-beaten side
Of the foam-besilver'd main,
Darkling, and alone, he stood :"

which, however, is less exuberant than the former passage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections ; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His *Institution of the Garter* (1742) is written with sufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction ; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserves the reader from weariness.

His imitations of Spenser are very successfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction ; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements together. But such compositions are not to be reckoned among the great achievements of intellect, because their effect is local and temporary ; they appeal not to reason or passion, but to memory, and pre-suppose an accidental or artificial state of mind. An imitation of Spenser is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenser has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation ; but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at least with the whole circle of polished life ; what is less than this can be only pretty, the plaything of fashion, and the amusement of a day.

There is in the *Adventurer* a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr. West's, and supposed to have been written by him. It should not be concealed, however, that it is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Dodsley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author ; and Hawkesworth, receiving it from him, thought it his ; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the public.

CHRISTOPHER PITT.*

(1699-1748.)

Christopher Pitt, of whom whatever I shall relate more than has been already published I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born, in 1699, at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed. He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance ; and at his removal to New College, in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe.

* Johnson.

This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is, indeed, culpable to load libraries with superfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superfluous: and from this example, the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had resided at his college three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimperne, in Dorsetshire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Strathfieldsaye, in Hampshire; and resigning his fellowship, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became M.A. (1724).

He probably about this time translated Vida's *Art of Poetry*, which Tristram's splendid edition had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living,—a place very pleasing by its situation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet,—where he passed the rest of his life, revered for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree cheerful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his *Miscellany*, published in 1727, it is not easy or necessary to know; those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his Vida animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a version of the first book of the *Eneid*. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or four more, with an advertisement, in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which he himself was hardly conscious. This can hardly be true, and if true, is nothing to the reader.

At last, without any farther contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete English *Eneid*. Pitt, engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally observed his failures, and avoided them; and as he wrote after Pope's *Iliad*, he had an example of an exact, equable, and splendid versification. With these advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errors. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and listless perusal; that Pitt pleases the critics, and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford, on which is this inscription:

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M.A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the universal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
simplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved,
Apr. 13, 1748,
aged 48.



JAMES THOMSON.*

(Born 1700.)

James Thomson, the son of a minister well esteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, of which his father was pastor. His mother, whose

* Johnson.

name was Hume,* inherited, as co-heiress, a portion of a small estate. The revenue of a parish in Scotland is seldom large; and it was probably in commiseration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomson supported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring minister, discovering in James uncommon promises of future excellence, undertook to superintend his education and provide him books.

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the school of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of *Autumn*; but was not considered by his master as superior to common boys, though in those early days he amused his patron and his friends with poetical compositions; with which, however, he so little pleased himself, that on every new-year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From the school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not resided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raised upon her little estate what money a mortgage could afford, and removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to see her son rising into eminence.

The design of Thomson's friends was to breed him a minister. He lived at Edinburgh, as at school, without distinction or expectation, till at the usual time he performed a probationary exercise by explaining a psalm. His diction was so poetically splendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the professor of divinity, reproved him for speaking language unintelligible to a popular audience; and he censured one of his expressions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repressed his thoughts of an ecclesiastical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his blossoms of poetry, which, however, were in some danger of a blast; for, submitting his productions to some who thought themselves qualified to criticise, he heard of nothing but faults; but finding other judges more favourable, he did not suffer himself to sink into despondence.

He easily discovered that the only stage on which a poet could appear with any hope of advantage was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady who was acquainted with his mother advised him to the journey, and promised some countenance or assistance, which at last he never received; however, he justified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to seek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the sons of the Duke of Montrose. He had recommendations to several persons of consequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he passed along the street, with the gaping curiosity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was stolen from him.

His first want was a pair of shoes. For the supply of all his ne-

* His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter. His grandmother's name was Hume.

cessities, his whole fund was his *Winter*, which for a time could find no purchaser, till at last Mr. Millar was persuaded to buy it at a low price, and this low price he had for some time reason to regret; but by accident Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomson obtained likewise the notice of Aaron Hill, whom, being friendless and indigent, and glad of kindness, he courted with every expression of servile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author, till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomson then received a present of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, if he desired that I should wait on him? He returned, he did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil manner, asked me some commonplace questions, and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own that the present was larger than my performance deserved, and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

The poem, which being of a new kind, few would venture at first to like, by degrees gained upon the public; and one edition was very speedily succeeded by another.

Thomson's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others, Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, sought his acquaintance, and found his qualities such, that he recommended him to the Lord Chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied in many editions not only with a preface and dedication, but with poetical praises by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then Malloch), and Mira, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to *Winter* and the other seasons, contrarily to custom, left out in the collected works, the reader may inquire.

The next year (1727) he distinguished himself by three publications: of *Summer*, in pursuance of his plan; of *A Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton*, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philosopher by the instruction of Mr. Gray; and of *Britannia*, a kind of poetical invective against the ministry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in resenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himself an adherent to the opposition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the court.

Thomson, having been some time entertained in the family of the Lord Binning, was desirous of testifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his *Summer*; but the same kindness which had first disposed Lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuse the dedication, which was by his advice addressed to Mr. Dodington, a

man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was published next year, with a dedication to the Countess of Hertford; whose practice it was to invite every summer some poet into the country, to hear her verses and assist her studies. This honour was one summer conferred on Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with Lord Hertford and his friends than assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.

Autumn, the season to which the *Spring* and *Summer* are preparatory, still remained unsung, and was delayed till he published (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of *Sophonisba*, which raised such expectation, that every rehearsal was dignified with a splendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the public. It was observed, however, that nobody was much affected, and that the company rose as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the stage no unusual degree of success. Slight accidents will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is a feeble line in the play:

“O Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!”

This gave occasion to a waggish parody:

“O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!”

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the prologue to *Sophonisba* the first part was written by Pope, who could not be persuaded to finish it; and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomson was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, sent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldest son of the chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impressions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be supposed to have wanted that curiosity which is inseparable from an active and comprehensive mind. He may therefore now be supposed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feasted with instructive novelties; he lived splendidly without expense; and might expect when he returned home a certain establishment.

At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomson, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied so many evils arising from the tyranny of other governments, that he resolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon liberty.

While he was busy on the first book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomson, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of secretary of the briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were spent, and the author congratulated himself upon it, as his noblest work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. Liberty called in vain upon her votaries to read her praises and reward her encomiast: her praises were condemned to harbour spiders and to gather dust: none of Thomson's performances were so little regarded.

The judgment of the public was not erroneous : the recurrence of the same images must tire in time ; an enumeration of examples to prove a position which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning superfluous, must quickly grow disgusting.

The poem of *Liberty* does not now appear in its original state ; but, when the author's works were collected after his death, was shortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifest tendency to lessen the confidence of society, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgment of another, cannot be justified by any supposed propriety of the alteration, or kindness of the friend.—I wish to see it exhibited as its author left it.*

Thomson now lived in ease and plenty, and seems for a while to have suspended his poetry ; but he was soon called back to labour by the death of the chancellor, for his place then became vacant ; and though the Lord Hardwick delayed for some time to give it away, Thomson's bashfulness or pride, or some other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from soliciting ; and the new chancellor would not give him what he would not ask.

He now relapsed to his former indigence ; but the Prince of Wales was at that time struggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton professed himself the patron of wit : to him Thomson was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the state of his affairs, said, "that they were in a more poetical posture than formerly ;" and had a pension allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738)† the tragedy of *Agamemnon*, which was much shortened in the representation. It had the fate which most commonly attends mythological stories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It struggled with such difficulty through the first night, that Thomson, coming late to his friends with whom he was to sup, excused his delay by telling them how the sweat of his distress had so disordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He so interested himself in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he sat in the upper gallery, he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frightened him to silence. Pope countenanced *Agamemnon* by coming to it the first night, and was welcomed to the theatre by a general clap : he had much regard for Thomson, and once expressed it in a poetical epistle sent to Italy ; of which, however, he abated the value by translating some of the lines into his epistle to Arbuthnot.‡

About this time the act was passed for licensing plays, of which the first operation was the prohibition of *Gustavus Vasa*, a tragedy

* "A poem to the memory of Mr. Congreve, inscribed to her Grace Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough, London, printed for J. Millar, and sold at his shop near the Horse Guards: 1729, price sixpence;" and a poetical address "To Love," both by Thomson, and neither included in any existing edition of his works, have been printed by the Percy Society, under the zealous care of Mr. Peter Cunningham.

† It is not generally known that in this year an edition of Milton's *Areopagitica* was published by Millar, to which Thomson wrote a preface.

‡ A part of the prologue to this play, the lines marked in the printed copies

of Mr. Brooke, whom the public recompensed by a very liberal subscription ; the next was the refusal of *Edward and Eleonora*, offered by Thomson. It is hard to discover why either play should have been obstructed. Thomson likewise endeavoured to repair his loss by a subscription, of which I cannot now tell the success.

When the public murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that "he had taken a *liberty* which was not agreeable to *Britannia* in any *season*."

He was soon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the mask of *Alfred*, which was acted before the prince at Cliefden House.

His next work (1745) was *Tancred and Sigismunda*, the most successful of all his tragedies, for it still keeps its turn upon the stage. It may be doubted whether he was, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the pathetic ; and his diffusive and descriptive style produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttelton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands ; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The last piece that he lived to publish was the *Castle of Indolence*, which was many years under his hand, but was at last finished with great accuracy. The first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination.

He was now at ease, but was not long to enjoy it ; for, by taking cold on the water between London and Kew, he caught a disorder which, with some careless exasperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inscription ; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

Thomson was of a stature above the middle size, and "more fat than bard beseems," of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance ; silent in mingled company, but cheerful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the stage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomson in fond intimacy, spoke in such a manner as showed him "to be," on that occasion, "no actor." The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin, who

by inverted commas, was prohibited to be spoken by the licenser. The "words of fear" were these :

"As such our fair attempt, we hope to see
Our judges, here at least, from influence free ;
One place unbiass'd yet by party rage,
Where only honour votes—the British stage.
We ask for justice, for indulgence sue :
Our best, last license must proceed from you."

is reported to have delivered Thomson, then known to him only for his genius, from an arrest by a very considerable present; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendship is not always the sequel of obligation.* By this tragedy a considerable sum was raised, of which part discharged his debts, and the rest was remitted to his sisters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderness, as will appear by the following letter, which I communicate with much pleasure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindness of Thomson, and reflecting on the friendly assistance of Mr. Boswell, from whom I received it:

“Hagley, in Worcestershire,

“October the 4th, 1747.

“My dear Sister,—I thought you had known me better than to interpret my silence into a decay of affection, especially as your behaviour has always been such as rather to increase than diminish it. Don't imagine, because I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother. I must do myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are naturally very fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of complaint against you (of which, by the by, I have not the least shadow), I am conscious of so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little charitable and forgiving.

“It gives me the truest heartfelt satisfaction to hear you have a good, kind husband, and are in easy, contented circumstances; but were they otherwise, that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness towards you. As our good and tender-hearted parents did not live to receive any material testimonies of that highest human gratitude I owed them (than which nothing could have given me equal pleasure), the only return I can make them now is by kindness to those they left behind them. Would to God poor Lizzy had lived longer, to have been a farther witness of the truth of what I say; and that I might have had the pleasure of seeing once more a sister who so truly deserved my esteem and love! But she is happy, while we must toil a little longer here below: let us, however, do it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of life will not perhaps be inconsistent with that blissful state. You did right to call your daughter by her name; for you must needs have had a particular tender friendship for one another, endeared as you were by nature, by having passed the affectionate years of your youth together, and by that great softener and engager of hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in my power to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquisite pleasures of my life. But enough of this melancholy though not unpleasing strain.

* Quin, learning that Thomson was in great distress, visited him, and told him he was in his debt. Thomson, who did not suppose that any man could owe him a single farthing, answered, with the jealousy of misfortune, somewhat peevishly; and he thought the assertion was meant to deride him. Quin answered, “Sir, I am one of many who are in your debt for the pleasure which your poem of the *Seasons* has afforded us, and you will give me leave to discharge my portion of it now that there is fit opportunity;” and so saying, presented him with a note for 100*l*.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see by my letter to him: as I approve entirely of his marrying again, you may readily ask me why I don't marry at all. My circumstances have hitherto been so variable and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce to keep me from engaging in such a state; and now, though they are more settled, and of late (which you will be glad to hear) considerably improved, I begin to think myself too far advanced in life for such youthful undertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons that are apt to startle the delicacy of difficult old bachelors. I am, however, not a little suspicious that, was I to pay a visit to Scotland (which I have some thoughts of doing soon), I might possibly be tempted to think of a thing not easily repaired if done amiss. I have always been of opinion, that none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more forsaken than they, while the gentlemen are continually running abroad all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return for a wife. You see I am beginning to make interest already with the Scots ladies. But no more of this infectious subject.—Pray let me hear from you now and then; and though I am not a regular correspondent, yet perhaps I may mend in that respect. Remember me kindly to your husband, and believe me to be

Your most affectionate brother,

"JAMES THOMSON.

(Addressed) "*To Mrs. Thomson, in Lanark.*"

The benevolence of Thomson was fervid,* but not active: he would give on all occasions what assistance his purse would supply; but the offices of intervention or solicitation he could not conquer his sluggishness sufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleness, but he never cured it; and was so conscious of his own character, that he talked of writing an Eastern tale "of the man who loved to be in distress."

Among his peculiarities was a very unskilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or solemn composition. He was once reading to Dodington, who, being himself a reader eminently elegant, was so much provoked by his odd utterance, that he snatched the paper from his hands, and told him that he did not understand his own verses.

The biographer of Thomson has remarked, that an author's life is best read in his works: his observation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomson,† once told me, he heard a lady remarking that she could gather from his works three parts of his character; that he was "a great lover, a great swimmer, and rigor-

* "He had the most benevolent heart that ever warmed the human breast."
—SMOLLETT, *History of England*, xiii. 433.

† "Several references to the two poets," writes Mr. Peter Cunningham, "occur in a curious little volume of letters, quite overlooked by Sir Harris Nicolas, and equally so by Mr. Corney, entitled 'A Collection of Letters never before printed, written by Alexander Pope, Esq. and other ingenious gentlemen, to the late Aaron Hill, Esq. 1751.' 12mo, pp. 88. Among these letters are fourteen from Thomson to Hill."

ously abstinent:" but, said Savage, he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage always spoke with the most eager praise of his social qualities, his warmth and constancy of friendship, and his adherence to his first acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praise of the highest kind: his mode of thinking and of expressing his thoughts is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction, are of his own growth, without transcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which Nature bestows only on a poet: the eye that distinguishes, in every thing presented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast and attends to the minute.

The reader of *The Seasons* wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shows him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomson impresses.

His is one of the works in which blank verse seems properly used. Thomson's wide expansion of general views, and his enumeration of circumstantial varieties, would have been obstructed and embarrassed by the frequent intersections of the sense, which are the necessary effects of rhyme.

His descriptions of extended scenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of spring, the splendour of summer, the tranquillity of autumn, and the horror of winter, take in their turns possession of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are successively varied by the vicissitudes of the year, and imparts to us so much of his own enthusiasm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without his part in the entertainment; for he is assisted to recollect and to combine, to range his discoveries, and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of *The Seasons* is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances subsisting all at once, no rule can be given why one should be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curiosity is not excited by suspense or expectation.

His diction is in the highest degree florid and luxuriant, such as may be said to be to his images and thoughts "both their lustre and their shade;" such as invest them with splendour, through which, perhaps, they are not always easily discerned. It is too exuberant, and sometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

These poems, with which I was acquainted at their first appearance, I have since found altered and enlarged by subsequent revisions, as the author supposed his judgment to grow more exact, and as books or conversation extended his knowledge and opened his pro-

spects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not lost part of what Temple calls their "race;" a word which, applied to wines in its primitive sense, means the flavour of the soil.

Liberty, when it first appeared, I tried to read, and soon desisted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praise or censure.

The highest praise which he has received ought not to be suppressed. It is said by Lord Lyttelton, in the prologue to his posthumous play, that his works contained

"No line which, dying, he could wish to blot."

EDWARD LOVIBOND.

(Circa 1700-1775.)

Mr. Lovibond, the son of an East-India director, was a gentleman of fortune, who passed the greater part of his life near Hampton, greatly beloved by all who knew him. He was an admirable scholar, of very amiable manners, and of great benevolence. After his death, which happened in September 1775, his poems were collected by his brother. *The Tears of Old May* is the most approved of these. To *The World* Lovibond furnished five papers.

ALEXANDER ROSS.

(1700-1788.)

Alexander Ross was born at Kincardine Oneil, Aberdeenshire, in 1700; and after some minor education in the local school, was sent to Mareschal College, Aberdeen, where he proceeded M.A. On quitting the university he settled at Berse, in his native county, as parochial schoolmaster; removing thence in 1733, in the same capacity, to Lochlee, in Forfarshire, where he spent the remainder of his simple and unvaried life in the proper discharge of his official duties. His pastoral tale, *Helanore, or the Fortunate Shepherdess*, was published at Aberdeen in 1768; and he appears to have composed several other poems, which, however, by the advice of his friend Dr. Beattie, were not published. *The Fortunate Shepherdess* Dr. Blacklock regarded as equal to Allan Ramsay's *Pastoral Comedy*; but this estimate exceeds the merits of the case.

STEPHEN DUCK.

(1700-1756.)

Stephen Duck was born at Great Charlton, in Wilts, on June 30, 1700. A mere labourer's son, he had originally no other learning than

reading, writing, and arithmetic. When about twenty-four years old, he married; and at service he managed to buy or borrow a few books, among which were an English dictionary, a sort of English grammar, an Ovid, and a Bysshe's *Art of Poetry*; while Seneca's *Morals* made the name of L'Estrange dear to him, and might occasion the getting his *Josephus*, in folio, which was the largest purchase in the collection. He had also one volume of Shakespeare, with seven plays in it. Besides these, Stephen had read three or four other plays, Dryden's Virgil, Prior, and *Hudibras*, with which helps Stephen grew something of a poet himself, and known as such to the clergymen in the neighbourhood; at the suggestion of one of whom, Mr. Stanley, he composed *The Thresher's Labour*, a rural poem, in which truth of description is not the only merit, for it displays in several parts command of language and skill in versification. He next composed a poem on the story of the Shunamite woman and her child, which he attempted in blank verse; but soon perceiving the futility of that endeavour, recast it in rhyme. By the kindness of the Honourable Mrs. Clayton, the Thresher was introduced to Queen Caroline, who settled 30*l.* a year upon him, made him one of the Yeomen of the Guard, and soon afterwards appointed him keeper of her private library at Richmond, where he had apartments assigned him, and was encouraged to pursue his studies with a view to the church. He now published a volume of his poems, dedicated to the queen, whose kindness to the unassuming poet excited the miserable envy, hatred, and malice of Swift, who actually condescended to assail Duck in an epigram. Stephen, however, had now obtained patrons powerful enough to shield him from such unworthy attacks. One of these liberal personages, Lord Palmerston, appropriated the rent of an acre of land for ever, to provide an annual dinner, on the 30th of June, and strong beer, for the threshers of Charlton, at a public-house in that valley, in honour of their former comrade. Another patron, Mr. Spence, procured for him, now duly qualified, the living of Byfleet, in Surrey, where he was highly respected by the congregation during the thirty years that he lived among them. Becoming insane, he threw himself into the Thames near Reading, in 1756, and was drowned. His poems were thought very highly of, not only by the critics of the time, but by Mr. Southey.

DAVID MALLET.*

(1700-1765.)

Of David Mallet,† having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorised loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

* Johnson.

† "A man of more talents than honesty, who was always ready to perform any dirty work for interest; to blast the characters either of the dead or the living, and to destroy life as well as reputation. Mallet was 'first assassin' in the tragedy of Admiral Byng's murder."—SOUTHEY.

He was, by his original, one of the Macgregors; a clan that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I suppose, of this author called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be janitor of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the Duke of Montrose applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were sent to see the world, they were intrusted to his care; and, having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he returned with them to London; where, by the influence of the family in which he resided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank and the highest character, to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the series. His first production was *William and Margaret*;^{*} of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not long afterwards he published *The Excursion* (1728); a desultory and capricious view of such scenes of nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of his images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose *Seasons* were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on *Verbal Criticism* (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit, and more confidence than knowledge. The versification is tolerable; nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was *Eurydice*, acted at Drury Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a prologue and epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation, so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country, I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

^{*} Mallet's *William and Margaret* was printed in Aaron Hill's *Plain Dealer*, No. 36, July 24, 1724. In its original state it was very different from what it is in the last edition of his works.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his *Essay on Man*, but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly what there was new. Mallet told him that the newest piece was something called an *Essay on Man*, which he had inspected idly; and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of the subject, had tossed it away. Pope, to punish his self-conceit, told him the secret.

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1750) for the press, Mallet was employed to prefix a life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some affectation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that when he afterwards undertook the *Life of Marlborough*, Warburton remarked that he might perhaps forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When the Prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, setting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate court, he endeavoured to increase his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary, with a salary of 200*l.* a year; Thomson likewise had a pension; and they were associated in the composition of *The Masque of Alfred*, which, in its original state, was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury Lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the *Life of Marlborough*, let him know that, in the series of great men quickly to be exhibited, he should find a niche for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him know that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. "Mr. Mallet," says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to write for the stage?" Mallet then confessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it; and *Alfred* was produced.

The long retardation of the life of the Duke of Marlborough shows, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was soon determined that his story should be delivered to posterity; and the papers supposed to contain the necessary information were delivered to Lord Molesworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When Molesworth died, the same papers were transferred with the same design to Sir Richard Steele, who, in some of his exigences, put them in pawn. They then remained with the old duchess, who in her will assigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of 1000*l.*, and a prohibition to insert any verses. Glover rejected, I suppose with disdain, the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet, who had from the late Duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he had made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the prince's service he published *Mustapha*, with a Prologue by Thomson, not mean, but far inferior to that which he had received from Mallet for *Agamemnon*. The Epilogue, said to be

written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the prince his master. It was acted at Drury Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740 he produced, as has been already mentioned, *The Masque of Alfred*, in conjunction with Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was *Amyntor and Theodora* (1747), a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy; but it is blank verse. This he sold to Vaillant for 120*l*. The first sale was not great, and it is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependence on the prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised number of the pamphlet called *The Patriot King*, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1749) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to refuse the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of Lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was referred to arbitrators; but when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and, by the help of Millar the bookseller, published all that he could find; but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1755, his masque of *Britannia* was acted at Drury Lane, and his tragedy of *Elvira* in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper of the Book of Entries for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war, when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the public vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a "Plain Man." The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he, for his seasonable intervention, had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter, who married an Italian of rank named Cilesia, wrote a tragedy called *Almida*, which was acted at Drury Lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent. His dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten; his blank verse seems to my ear the echo of Thomson. His *Life of Bacon* is known, as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer bustling in the world, showing himself in public, and emerging occasionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topics of conversation and other modes of amusement.

JOHN DYER.*

(1700-1758.)

John Dyer, of whom I have no other account to give than his own *Letters*, published with Hughes's *Correspondence*, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer of Aberglasney, Caermarthenshire, a solicitor of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster-school, under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law; but, having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied awhile under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting, and about 1727 printed *Grongar Hill* in Lewis's *Miscellany*.

Being, probably, unsatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published *The Ruins of Rome*.

If his poem was written soon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions in painting, whatever they might be; for decline of health and love of study determined him to the Church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it seems, married about the same time a lady of the name of Ensor, "whose grandmother," says he, "was a Shakespeare, descended from a brother of every body's Shakespeare;" by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclesiastical provision was for a long time but slender. His first patron, Mr. Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp in Leicestershire, of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnshire, of seventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1751, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and forty pounds a year; and in 1755, the

* Johnson.

chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expenses, took away the profit. In 1757 he published *The Fleece*, his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodsley, the bookseller, was one day mentioning it to a critical visitor, with more expectation of success than the other could easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, "He will," said the critic, "be buried in woollen."

He did not, indeed, long survive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments, for on July 24, 1758, he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. *Grongar Hill* is the happiest of his productions; it is not, indeed, very accurately written, but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise are so welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer so consonant to the general sense or experience of mankind, that when it is once read it will be read again.

The idea of *The Ruins of Rome* strikes more, but pleases less; and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some passages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as, when in the neighbourhood of dilapidating edifices, he says:

" — The pilgrim oft
At dead of night, mid his orison hears
Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon."

Of *The Fleece*, which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recal it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to couple the serpent with the fowl. When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery and incidental digressions, by clothing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

Let me, however, honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenside, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, "That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fall of Dyer's *Fleece*; for if that were ill received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence."

MOSES BROWN.

(1703-1787.)

Moses Brown, of whom the little that is personally known is derived from an incidental pleasantry concerning him in the biography of Cowper, was originally a pen-cutter; but he took orders, and obtained the vicarage of Olney, and the chaplaincy to Morden College. He was one of the first contributors to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and obtained some of the prizes offered by Mr. Cave for the best poems. Besides some dramatic pieces, and a genial edition of Walton's *Angler*, he published, 1. *Piscatory Eclogues*, 1727; 2. *Sunday Thoughts*, a poem; 3. *Percy Lodge*, a descriptive poem.

His calm and gentle life was prolonged to a late period. Cowper wanted his parsonage for a friend of Lady Hesketh; "but Moses Brown, our vicar," he says, "who, as I told you, is in his eighty-sixth year, is not bound to die for that reason: he said himself, when he was here last summer, that he should live ten years longer; and, for aught that appears, so he may." This letter is dated 1786; and Moses Brown, despite his energetic purpose to the contrary, died the year after.

WILLIAM HAMILTON.

(1704-1754.)

This poet was born in Ayrshire in 1704. He received a liberal education, to which he joined the accomplishments of a man of the world. In 1745 he joined the cause of the Pretender; but after the battle of Culloden he was fain to provide for his safety in flight; and resided on the Continent until he received a pardon, and was enabled to visit his native land. To recruit his health, however, he was obliged to return to France, where he died in 1754.

"The mind of the elegant and accomplished William Hamilton of Bangour," writes Lord Woodhouslee, "is pictured in his verses: the easy and careless effusions of an elegant fancy and a chastened taste, and the genuine feelings of a tender and susceptible heart. His acquaintance with the most elegant modern writers, as with those of antiquity, is manifested in his *Contemplation; or, the Triumph of Love*." Hamilton's *Braes of Yarrow*, in imitation of an old Scottish ballad on a similar subject, is printed by Percy in his *Reliques*.

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

(Circa 1708-1792.)

John Armstrong was born at Castleton, Roxburghshire, of which place his father was the clergyman; and having completed his education at the University of Edinburgh, took his degree in physic, Feb. 4;

1732, with much reputation. His thesis, *De Tabè Purulente*, was published as usual.

He appears to have courted the Muses while a student. His *Sketch in Imitation of Shakespeare*, one of his first attempts, received the approbation of Thomson, Mallet, and Young. There were other imitations by him of Shakespeare, part of an unfinished tragedy, written at about the same time.

At what time he came to London is uncertain; but in 1775 he published, anonymously, an attack upon the quackery of unscientific practitioners, entitled, *An Essay for abridging the Study of Physic*, dedicated to "Antacademic philosophers, to the generous despisers of the schools, to the deservedly celebrated Joshua Ward, John More, and the rest of the numerous sect of inspired physicians."

In 1737 he published a treatise on Lues, which, unluckily for himself, was followed by his poem, *The Economy of Love*, which, though



JOHN ARMSTRONG.

it had a rapid sale, so impeded, by its immoral tone, his professional career, that in 1741 he endeavoured to obtain a medical appointment in the West Indies.

His celebrated poem, *The Art of preserving Health*, appeared in 1774, and contributed highly to his fame as a poet.

In 1746 he was appointed one of the physicians to the hospital for lame and sick soldiers behind Buckingham House. In 1751 he published his poem *On Benevolence. Taste, an Epistle to a Young Critic* (1753), is a lively and spirited imitation of Pope. In 1758 he published *Sketches; or, Essays on Various Subjects*, under the name of Lancelot Temple, Esq. They are deformed by perpetual affectation, a struggle to say smart things, and by oaths and vulgar exclamations.

In 1760 he was appointed physician to the army in Germany, whence, in 1761, he addressed a poem, called *Day*, to Wilkes. Some supposed reflections, in this poem, on Churchill, induced the satirist to retort on Armstrong, in *The Journey*, with a charge of ingratitude to Wilkes, from whom Armstrong had, on his return, become estranged on political grounds.

After the peace, Armstrong resided some years in London, where his practice was confined to a small circle, but where he was respected as a man of general knowledge and taste, and an agreeable companion. In 1770 he published two volumes of *Miscellanies*, containing the poems already mentioned, except *The Economy of Love*; with, besides the *Universal Almanac*, a wretched production, the *Forced Marriage*, a tragedy, which had been most deservedly rejected by Garrick; and a second part of *Sketches*, in which the author seems to have conceived a rooted aversion to the whole human race, except a few friends, who were dead.

In 1771 he published another extraordinary effusion of spleen, under the title of *A Short Ramble through some parts of France and Italy*; the ramble having been taken in company with Fuseli the painter. In 1773 appeared a pamphlet of *Medical Essays*, full of theoretical conjectures, and sour with complaints of the world.

He died in Russell-street, Covent-garden, Sept. 7, 1779. His death was attributed to an accidental contusion on his thigh while getting into the carriage which had brought him to town from a visit in Lincolnshire. To the surprise of his friends, who thought poverty was the foundation of his frequent complaints, he left more than 3000*l.*, saved out of a very moderate income, arising principally from his half-pay.

GEORGE LORD LYTTTELTON.*

(1709-1773.)

George Lyttelton, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, of Hagley, in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his schoolfellows.

From Eton he went to Christ Church, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the public in a poem on *Blenheim*.

He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His *Progress of Love* and his *Persian Letters*† were both written when he was very young; and indeed the character of a young man is very visible in both. The verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches

* Johnson.

† "Letters from a Persian in England to his friend at Ispahan," in imitation of Montesquieu. 1735.

when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.

He stayed not long in Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy.* When he returned, he obtained a seat in Parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole; though his father, who was Commissioner of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttelton was seen in every account of every debate in the House of Commons. He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for petitioning the king to remove Walpole. His zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and, when Walpole was at last hunted from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttelton from the Secret Committee.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St. James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttelton became his secretary, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He persuaded his master, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-secretary, with 200*l.*; and Thomson had a pension of 100*l.* a year. For Thomson, Lyttelton always retained his kindness, and was able at last to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called *The Trial of Selim*; for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes, that were at last disappointed.

Lyttelton now stood in the first rank of opposition; and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots.† This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house, imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner so unjust and licentious. Lyttelton supported his friend; and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.

While he was thus conspicuous, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue, of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the late Lord Lyttelton, and two daughters; and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity: but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards; and he solaced himself by writing a long poem to her memory.‡

He did not, however, condemn himself to perpetual solitude and

* He wrote thence a series of letters to his father, which are marked by manly sentiment and filial regard.

† "Free as young Lyttelton her cause pursue,
Still true to virtue, and as warm as true."

‡ This criticism is remarked by Dr. Anderson to be sparing and wondrous: by those, adds Mr. Park, who have perused his lordship's monody, with the thrilling sympathy of conjugal love, it will also be deemed insensate. Smollett's brutal burlesque was hardly more unfeeling. Dr. Aiken recommends Lyttelton to the perusal of the fair sex, from having peculiar claims to their notice as a lover and a husband, who felt the tender passion with equal ardour and purity.

sorrow ; for, after a while, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich ; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury ; and from that time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politics did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity ; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true ; and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747) by *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul* ; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted.

“ I have read your religious treatise with infinite pleasure and satisfaction. The style is fine and clear, the arguments close, cogent, and irresistible. May the King of kings, whose glorious cause you have so well defended, reward your pious labours, and grant that I may be found worthy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an eye-witness of that happiness which I don't doubt he will bountifully bestow upon you. In the meantime, I shall never cease glorifying God, for having endowed you with such useful talents, and giving me so good a son.

“ Your affectionate father,

“ THOMAS LYTTELTON.”

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large estate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn by a house of great elegance and expense, and by much attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his activity in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment ; and accordingly, was made in time (1754) cofferer and privy councillor : this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the exchequer ; an office, however, that required some qualifications which he soon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiosity led him into Wales ; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he has conceived an opinion more favourable than he seems to have deserved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and fame, he was never persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities ; attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground ; at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

About this time Lyttelton published his *Dialogues of the Dead*, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study; rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and, when they have met, they too often part without any conclusion. He has copied Fenelon more than Fontenelle.

When they were first published, they were kindly commended by the *Critical Reviewers*; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned, in a note which I have read, acknowledgments which can never be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttelton, losing with the rest his employment, was recompensed with a peerage, and rested from political turbulence in the House of Lords.

His last literary production was his *History of Henry the Second*, elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the press were at the expense of the author, whose ambitious accuracy is known to have cost him at least a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a second edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without considerable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to persuade Lyttelton, as he had persuaded himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation: and as fear begets credulity, he was employed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of *Henry the Second*. The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy; of which, when he had paid the pointer, he probably gave the rest away; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When time brought the *History* to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the style of Doctor. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done; for to the Doctor's edition is appended, what the world has hardly seen before, a list of errors in nineteen pages.*

But to politics and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man; he

* Lord Lyttelton's other prose works were:

Observations on the Life of Cicero, and on the Roman History.

Observations on the present State of Affairs at Home and Abroad.

Two Letters to Mr. Bower, giving an account of a Journey into Wales.

Two Letters to Mr. Boswell, in the *London Chronicle*.

Four Speeches in Parliament; and,

Some of the Papers on Common Sense.

had a slender, uncompacted frame, and a meagre face; he lasted, however, sixty years, and was then seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician,* which will spare me the task of his moral character.

"On Sunday evening the symptoms of his lordship's disorder, which for a week past had alarmed us, put on a fatal appearance, and his lordship believed himself to be a dying man. From this time he suffered from restlessness rather than pain; though his nerves were apparently much fluttered, his mental faculties never seemed stronger, when he was thoroughly awake.

"His lordship's bilious and hepatic complaints seemed alone not equal to the expected mournful event; his long want of sleep, whether the consequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is more probable, of causes of a different kind, accounts for his loss of strength, and for his death, very sufficiently.

"Though his lordship wished his approaching dissolution not to be lingering, he waited for it with resignation. He said, 'It is a folly, a keeping me in misery, now to attempt to prolong life;' yet he was easily persuaded, for the satisfaction of others, to do or take any thing thought proper for him. On Saturday he had been remarkably better, and we were not without some hopes of his recovery.

"On Sunday, about eleven in the forenoon, his lordship sent for me, and said he felt a great hurry, and wished to have a little conversation with me, in order to divert it. He then proceeded to open the fountain of that heart, from whence goodness had so long flowed, as from a copious spring. 'Doctor,' said he, 'you shall be my confessor: when I first set out in the world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me; but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and it is the ground of my future hopes. I have erred and sinned; but have repented, and never indulged any vicious habit. In politics and public life I have made public good the rule of my conduct. I never gave counsels which I did not at the time think the best. I have seen that I was sometimes in the wrong; but I did not err designedly. I have endeavoured, in private life, to do all the good in my power, and never for a moment could indulge malicious or unjust designs upon any person whatsoever.'

"At another time he said, 'I must leave my soul in the same state it was in before this illness; I find this a very inconvenient time for solicitude about any thing.'

"On the evening, when the symptoms of death came on, he said, 'I shall die; but it will not be your fault.' When Lord and Lady Valentia came to see his lordship, he gave them his solemn benediction, and said, 'Be good, be virtuous, my lord; you must come to this.' Thus he continued, giving his dying benediction to all around him. On Monday morning a lucid interval gave some small hopes;

* Dr. Johnstone of Kidderminster.

but these vanished in the evening, and he continued dying, but with very little uneasiness, till Tuesday morning, August 22, when, between seven and eight o'clock, he expired, almost without a groan."

His lordship was buried at Hagley; and the following inscription is cut on the side of his lady's monument:

"This unadorned stone was placed here
by the particular desire and express
directions of the Right Honourable
GEORGE LORD LYTTLTON,
who died August 22, 1773, aged 64."

Lord Lyttelton's poems are the works of a man of literature and judgment devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be despised, and little to be admired. Of his *Progress of Love*, it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in *Blenheim* has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether songs or epigrams, are sometimes sprightly and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom elevates or surprises. But from this censure ought to be excepted his *Advice to Belinda*; which, though for the most part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shows a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.

PAUL WHITEHEAD.

(1710-1774.)

Paul Whitehead, the son of a tailor, was born in Castle-street, Holborn, February 1710; and after a slight education at Hitchen, in Hertfordshire, was apprenticed to a mercer in London, in whose service he found time for making the acquaintance of several literary persons, by whose advice he entered himself a student of the Middle Temple. The result of a money-transaction with reckless Maurice Fleetwood kept the law-student in the King's Bench for several years; but in 1735 he married a woman with 10,000*l.*; and being thus exempted from more laborious pursuits, proceeded to indulge his taste for poetry, and his antagonism against the ruling powers in the state, by various diatribes in verse. His *State Dunc* (1753), a satire, was inscribed to Pope, and is a close imitation of that writer. The keenness of his abuse, the harmony of his verse, and, above all, the personalities which he dealt about him with a most liberal hand, conferred popularity on this poem, and procured for him the favour of the party then in opposition. For his satire, *Manners* (1739), Whitehead was summoned to the bar of the House of Lords; but he did not appear there; and the authorities, finding the menace implied sufficient to keep the satirist quiet for some time, took no further steps in the matter. The partisans of the government essayed to annoy Whitehead with a reminiscence of his infidel bravadoes published in

earlier life; but he was of too callous a character to be thus worried out of his retirement.

In 1744 Whitehead published the *Gymnasiad*, a satire on pugilism; and soon after *Honour*, an attack on the leading men in power, whom he calumniated with relentless and undistinguishing bitterness.



PAUL WHITEHEAD.

When the party whom he had supported by his writings came into office, he obtained from their gratitude the sinecure office of Deputy Treasurer to the Chamber, worth 800*l.* a year, and retired in elegant hospitality of life to Twickenham. He died in lodgings in Henrietta-street, Covent-garden, December 30, 1774.

One period of his life was disgraced by his participation in the filthy orgies of Mednam Abbey; but his latter years appear to have been without reproach. He was a kind-hearted, generous man; and, the aberration just mentioned allowed for, and which may in large measure be explained by his utter incapacity to resist the persuasions of those about him, an affectionate husband.

JAMES HAMMOND.*

(1710-1742.)

Of Mr. Hammond, though he be well remembered as a man esteemed and caressed by the elegant and the great, I was at first able to obtain no other memorials than such as are supplied by a book called Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*; of which I take this opportunity to

* Johnson.

testify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever seen, by either of the Cibbers; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute understanding, though with little scholastic education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a consumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a prisoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession.

I have since found that Mr. Shiels, though he was no negligent inquirer, had been misled by false accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the *Elegies*, was the son of a Turkey merchant, and had some office at the Prince of Wales's Court, till love of a lady, whose name was Dashwood, for a time disordered his understanding. He was unextinguishably amorous, and his mistress inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative, part is true, and part false. He was the second son of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators, in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his sister.* He was born about 1710, and educated at Westminster School; but it does not appear that he was of any university.† He was equerry to the Prince of Wales; and seems to have come very early into public notice, and to have been distinguished by those whose friendship prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of the man on whom they were bestowed; for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttelton, and Chesterfield. He is said to have divided his life between pleasure and books; in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety losing the student. Of his literary hours, all the effects are here exhibited, of which the *Elegies* were written very early, and the prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was chosen into parliament for Truro, in Cornwall, probably one of those who were elected by the Prince's influence; and died next year, in June, at Stowe, the famous seat of Lord Cobham. His mistress long outlived him, and, in 1779, died unmarried. The character which her lover bequeathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtship.

The *Elegies* were published after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondness, they were read with a resolution to admire them.

The recommendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the Earl of Chesterfield, raised strong prejudices in their favour.

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reasonably suspected that he never read the poems; for he professes to value them for a very high species of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effusions of the mind which expresses a real passion in the language of nature. But the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no

* This account is still erroneous. James Hammond, our author, was of a different family, the second son of Anthony Hammond, of Somersham-place, in the county of Huntingdon, Esq.

† Mr. Cole gives him to Cambridge.

RICHARD GLOVER.

passion. He that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Nessera or Delia as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery, deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered.

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with what shall follow :

“ Wilt thou in tears thy lover’s corse attend ;
With eyes averted light the solemn pyre,
Till all around the doleful flames ascend,
Then slowly sinking, by degrees expire ?

To sooth the hovering soul be thine the care,
With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band ;
In sable weeds the golden vase to bear,
And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand :

Panchaia’s odours be their costly feast,
And all the pride of Asia’s fragrant year,
Give them the treasures of the farthest East,
And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.”

Surely no blame can fall upon a nymph who rejected a swain of so little meaning.

His verses are not rugged, but they have no sweetness ; they never glide in a stream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have thought the quatrain of ten syllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the elegy is gentleness and tenuity ; but this stanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whose knowledge of English metre was not inconsiderable, to be the most magnificent of all the measures which our language affords.

RICHARD GLOVER.

(1712-1785.)

Richard Glover, the son of Richard Glover, a Hamburgh merchant in London, was born in St. Martin’s-lane, Cannon-street, in 1712. Being intended for trade, he received no other education than what the school of Cheam, in Surrey, afforded ; but this he afterwards improved by sedulous self-instruction, so as to become one of the best and most accurate Greek scholars of his time.

Mr. Glover, in due course, entered upon his father’s business ; but literature occupied much of his leisure. His chief production, *Leonidas*, commenced in very early life, was published in 1737 ; and in that and the following year it passed through three editions. This poem at once attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, then

holding a separate court, surrounded by the opposition ; and the author received from the prince an invitation to attend his circle, where he was, while the immediate political object subsisted, received with great favour.

In the following year he published *London ; or, the Progress of Commerce*, and the celebrated ballad of *Hosier's Ghost*, both written with a view to rouse the nation to resent the conduct of the Spaniards, and to promote what had seldom been known, a war called for by the people, and opposed by the ministry. He was on a visit at Stowe when he wrote this ballad, the most spirited of all his productions. The thought occurred to him during the night ; he rose early, and



RICHARD GLOVER.

went into the garden to compose ; in the heat of composition he got into the tulip-bed, and, unfortunately, having a stick in his hand, hewed and slashed all around him without mercy. Some of the company, who had seen him from the windows, and suspected how his mind was occupied, asked him at breakfast how he could think of destroying Lady Temple's favourite flowers. The poet, perfectly unconscious of what he had done, pleaded not guilty. There were, however, witnesses enough to convict him : he acknowledged that he had been composing in the garden ; and was easily forgiven when he recited his ballad.

In 1739 and 1740 he took a prominent part in the opposition

aroused in the city to the proceedings of the ministry, an occupation that may have contributed to the deterioration of his business-affairs, which we find to have occurred at about this time, but which was afterwards, to a large extent, remedied. In 1754 he produced *Boadicea*, a tragedy, which had a run of nine nights at Drury-lane; and in 1761 he published *Medea*, a tragedy on the Greek model.

On the accession of George III., Mr. Glover, his affairs having been retrieved, became M.P. for Weymouth; and distinguished himself in the house by sound sense and considerable eloquence, applied to the discussion of commercial questions; and so much to the satisfaction of the mercantile classes, that in 1775 the West India merchants presented him with a service of plate, to the value of 300*l*. He died at his house in Albemarle-street, November 25, 1785, having completed for publication his epic entitled the *Athenaid*.

The life and soul of poetry were not in Glover (writes Southey); but he loved liberty with fervour, worthy of a Greek or of an Englishman; and *Leonidas* will continue to be read in spite of its bad language and disjointed versification, because the whole history of mankind furnishes no other subject so animated and so ennobling. His *Athenaid* wants this moral dignity. Themistocles is the chief personage; and it is impossible to conceal that Themistocles was rather a statesman than a hero. Still, the poem is a very pleasing one: it deserves to be better known, and should always accompany the *Leonidas*. Glover thought it the best of the two; it was the work of his old age, and, in the vanity of an honest heart, he would sometimes boast that it was longer than the *Iliad*.

EDWARD MOORE.

(1712-1757.)

Edward Moore, the son of a dissenting clergyman at Abingdon, in Berkshire, after unsuccessfully prosecuting the business of a linen-draper in London and elsewhere, applied himself to literature as a livelihood. His first production, *Fables for the Female Sex*, by its popularity, justified this course. Not only in the freedom and ease of their versification, but in their pungency, they perhaps approached nearer to Gay than any of the numerous imitations of this author that were sent forth. This publication procured for its author, among other influential friendships, that of the Right Hon. Mr. Pelham; as his next work, *The Trial of Selim the Persian*, gained for him that of Lord Lyttelton, in compliment to whom the poem was composed. Of Mr. Moore's three dramatic compositions, *The Foundling* and *Gil Blas* were unsuccessful; but *The Gamester* has, from its first production, enjoyed great popularity. Many of the more effective passages were contributed by the eminent actor whose impersonation of the hero had doubtless much to do with the triumph of the tragedy.

In 1751 commenced the periodical paper called *The World*, founded by Lord Lyttelton, in conjunction with Dodsley, as a mode of providing an income for Moore, who was to receive all the profits

of the sale, which became considerable. Moore himself wrote sixty-one of the papers. In the last number of the periodical, the conclusion is made to depend on a fictitious incident, which had occasioned the death of the author; and by a singular coincidence, the death of Edward Moore took place (Feb. 28, 1757) while this last number was passing through the press in a collective form. Moore, writes Gay, was a poet who never had justice done him while living. There are few of the moderns who have a more correct taste, or a more pleasing manner of expressing their thoughts. It was upon his *Fables* he chiefly founded his reputation; yet they are by no means his best production.

REV. JOSIAH RELPH.

(1712-1743.)

Josiah Relph was the son of a Cumberland *statesman*, who, on a paternal inheritance which could not exceed, if it even amounted to, 30*l.* a year, brought up a family of three sons and a daughter, one of whom he educated for a learned profession. Josiah was sent first to Appleby school, one of the many excellent schools of that county; then to Glasgow: he afterwards engaged in a grammar-school in his native place, Sebergham, in Cumberland, and ultimately succeeded to the perpetual curacy there; but there is no reason to believe that his income was ever more than 50*l.* a year.

It appears from his diary that his step-mother was harsh and unkind to him and his sister, whom he dearly loved, his father siding with his wife; an injury which he felt the more poignantly from his having, either entirely, or very near, made up to him all the expenses he had been at in his education. "In a lovely dell," says Mr. Boucher, who wrote, with much feeling, the life of this interesting man, "by a murmuring stream, under the canopy of heaven, he had provided himself a table and a stool, and a little raised seat or altar of sods; hither, in all his difficulties and distresses, in imitation of his Saviour, he retired and prayed; rising from his knees, he generally committed to paper the meditation on which he had been employed, or the resolves he had then formed. On businesses and emergencies which he deemed still more momentous, he withdrew into the church, and there walking in the aisles, in that awful solitude poured out his soul in prayer and praise to his Maker. His sermons were usually meditated in the churchyard after the evening had closed. The awe which his footsteps excited at that unusual hour is not yet forgotten by the villagers."

He continued in charge of the school, when his constitution was visibly giving way to that disorder which at length proved mortal, being accelerated by his ascetic mode of living. "A few days before his death, he sent for all his pupils, one by one, into his chamber;—a more affecting interview it is impossible to conceive; one of them," writes Mr. Boucher, "who is still living, acknowledges that he never thinks of it without awe; it reminds him, he says, of the last judgment. He was perfectly composed, collected, and serene; his vale-

dictory admonitions were not very long, but they were earnest and pathetic. He addressed each of them in terms somewhat different, adapted to their different tempers and circumstances; but in one charge he was uniform: lead a good life, that your death may be easy, and everlastingly happy." He died of consumption, before he had completed his 32d year. After many years a monument was erected to his memory by Mr. Boucher. His writings, *Miscellany of Poems*, with Pastorals in the Cumberland dialect, which evince no indication of his ascetic disposition, have been since published, the first edition being under the care of his pupil, the Rev. Mr. Denton. The characters, as well as the imagery, of these Cumbrian pastorals, were taken from real life; there was hardly a person in the village who could not point out those who had sat for two of the portraits, Cursty and Peggy.

WILLIAM THOMPSON.

(Died circa 1767.)

It is not certain where William Thompson was born; but in 1734 and 1736 he wrote *Stella, sive Amores, Tres Libri*, and six pastorals, none of which he thought proper to include in his published works.

It was on the banks of the Eden, which runs near Brough, that his "prattling Muse was first provoked to numbers," and where he wrote most of the smaller pieces that he thought worthy of preservation. At the usual age he went to Queen's College, Oxford.

In 1757 he published two volumes, or, as he quaintly terms them, *tomos* of poems, by subscription, with prefaces and notes, which give us a high idea of the author's modesty, piety, and learning.

When an undergraduate he wrote *Gondibert and Bertha*, a tragedy, taken from Davenant's poem of *Gondibert*. An earnest admirer of Spenser, he was, at a long distance of course, an imitator of that poet. His *Nativity* has much sweetness and gracefully solemn imagery.

His *Hymn to May* has received more praise than any of his other pieces; but his poem *Sickness* is the longest, and altogether, perhaps, the most successful effort of his Muse. The reflections are natural, and solemnly impressive. In borrowing the language of Scripture, he has employed it with less change of its original beauty than might have been expected. The poetical beauties of the *Palace of Disease*, the *Delirious Dreams*, and the greater part of the fourth book on *Recovery*, have much of the fire and enthusiasm of true genius.

In 1738 Thompson proceeded M.A. He afterwards became a fellow of his college, and succeeded to the living of South Weston and Hampton Poyle, in Oxfordshire. His poem *Sickness* was published in 1746. He became dean of Raphoe in Ireland, where, it is presumed, he died some time before the year 1767.

In 1751 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the poetry professorship, against Hawkins. In 1756 he published *Gratitude*, a poem, in honour of the donation by the Countess-Dowager of Pomfret.



WILLIAM SHENSTONE.*

(1714-1763.)

William Shenstone, the son of Thomas Shenstone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leasowes in Hales-Owen, one of those insulated districts which, in the division of the kingdom, was appended, for some reason not now discoverable, to a distant county; and which, though surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire, though perhaps thirty miles distant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of *The School-mistress* has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for fresh entertainment, and expected that, when any of the family went to market, a new book should be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for a while to the grammar-school in Hales-Owen; and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent schoolmaster at Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress.

When he was young (June 1724), he was deprived of his father,

* Johnson.

and soon after (August 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name in the book ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the civilian's gown, but without showing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the Rev. Mr. Dolman, of Brome, in Staffordshire, whose attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and in 1737 published a small miscellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life, and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of public resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1741 his *Judgment of Hercules*, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, whose interest he supported with great warmth at an election; this was next year followed by *The Schoolmistress*.

Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty than the increase of its produce.

Now was excited his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, and to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden,—demands any great powers of mind, I will not inquire; perhaps a surly and sullen spectator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed, by the most supercilious observer, to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone; but like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the petty state that appeared behind it. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they

took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation, there will be vanity; and where there is vanity, there will be folly.*

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye: he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks, he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but could spare no money for its reparation.

In time his expenses brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies.† He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that, if he had lived a little longer, he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leasowes of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the side of his brother in the churchyard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his *Pastoral Ballad* was addressed. He is represented by his friend Dodsley as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not easily appeased; inattentive to economy, and careless of his expenses. In his person he was larger than the middle size, with something clumsy in his form; very negligent of his clothes, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner; for

* This charge against the Lyttelton family has been denied with some degree of warmth by Mr. Potter, and since by Mr. Graves. The latter says, "The truth of the case, I believe, was, that the Lyttelton family went so frequently with their family to the Leasowes, that they were unwilling to break in upon Mr. Shenstone's retirement on every occasion, and therefore often went to the principal points of view without waiting for any one to conduct them regularly through the whole walks. Of this Mr. Shenstone would sometimes peevishly complain; though, I am persuaded, he never really suspected any ill-natured intention in his worthy and much-valued neighbours."

† Mr. Graves, however, expresses his belief that this is a groundless surmise. "Mr. Shenstone," he adds, "was too much respected in the neighbourhood to be treated with rudeness; and though his works (frugally as they were managed) added to his manner of living, must necessarily have made him exceed his income, and, of course, he might sometimes be distressed for money, yet he had too much spirit to expose himself to insults from trifling sums, and guarded against any great distress by anticipating a few hundreds; which his estate could very well bear, as appeared by what remained to his executors after the payment of his debts, and his legacies to his friends, and annuities of thirty pounds a year to one servant, and six pounds to another; for his will was dictated with equal justice and generosity."

he held that the fashion was no rule of dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form.*

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime; the *Elegy on Jessie*, which has been supposed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Miss Godfrey in Richardson's *Pamela*.

What Gray thought of his character from the perusal of his letters, was this :

"I have read too an octavo volume of Shenstone's letters. Poor man ! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned, but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see and commend it; his correspondence is about nothing else but this place and his own writings, with two or three neighbouring clergymen who wrote verses too."

His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humorous sallies, and moral pieces.

His conception of an elegy he has in his preface very judiciously and discriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of slight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topics of praise are the domestic virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the essence is uniformity will be soon described. His elegies have, therefore, too much resemblance of each other.

The lines are sometimes—such as elegy requires—smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant; his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined or ill-chosen; and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

The lyric poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, *Rural Elegance* has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent: *The Skylark* pleases me best, which has, however, more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his *Pastoral Ballad* demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the

* "These," says Mr. Graves, "were not precisely his sentiments, though he thought right enough, that every one should, in some degree, consult his particular shape and complexion in adjusting his dress; and that no fashion ought to sanctify what was ungraceful, absurd, or really deformed."

crook, the pipe, the sheep, and the kids, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice ; for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to show the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanza seems to have been chosen in imitation of Rowe's *Despairing Shepherd*.

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature :

" I priz'd every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before ;
But now they are past, and I sigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt in my heart !
Yet I thought (but it might not be so)
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern ;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return."

In the second this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former :

" I have found out a gift for my fair ;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed :
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed.

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young ;
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue."

In the third he mentions the commonplaces of amorous poetry with some address :

" 'Tis his with mock-passion to glow !
'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold
How her face is as bright as the snow,
And her bosom, be sure, is as cold ;
How the nightingales labour the strain,
With the notes of this charmer to vie ;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs, and die."

In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural strain of hope :

" Alas ! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes,
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose ?

Yet time may diminish the pain :
The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,
Which I reared for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me."

His *Levities* are by their title exempted from the severities of criticism; yet it may be remarked in a few words, that his humour is sometimes gross, and seldom sprightly.

Of the moral poems, the first is *The Choice of Hercules*, from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts just; but something of vigour is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His *Fate of Delicacy* has an air of gaiety, but not a very pointed and general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. *Love and Honour* is derived from the old ballad, "Did you not hear of a Spanish lady?" I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The Schoolmistress, of which I know not what claims it has to stand among the moral works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular style, in light and short compositions, contributes much to the increase of pleasure: we are entertained at once with two imitations—of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the style; and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable.

JOHN BROWN.

(1715-1766.)

John Brown was born at Rothbury, Northumberland, in 1715. Having passed through St. John's College with great success, he was ordained, and became chaplain to Dr. Osbaldistone, bishop of Carlisle. He was the author of several poetical pieces. One of these, entitled *Honour*, is written to show that true honour can only have its foundation in virtue. Another, an *Essay on Satire*, is prefixed to the second volume of Warburton's edition of Pope, together with his address to that prelate. In 1751 he published an *Essay on Shaftesbury's Characteristics*. In 1755 appeared his tragedy of *Barbarossa*, which still keeps the stage; and in the following year another tragedy by him, *Athelstane*, which has never been performed since the season of its first appearance, though Reed says it is much the more original and better executed piece of the two. In 1757 he published his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, which passed through seven editions in little more than one year, and had a most extraordinary effect upon the national mind. He added a second volume to the work in 1758. Obtaining the vicarage of St. Nicholas, Newcastle, he resigned that of Great Horkealey in Essex, to which he had been presented by Lord Hardwicke, on the recommendation of Mr. Allen. He received no other preferment, which, to a person of Dr. Brown's spirit, must have been a great mortification. In the latter part of his life he had an invitation from the empress of Russia to su-

perintend a grand design she had formed of extending the advantages of civilisation over that great empire. He accepted the offer, and actually prepared for the journey; but finding his health in too precarious a state to admit of his fulfilling his intention, he was obliged to relinquish it. This and other disappointments brought on a dejection of spirits, to which he had before been subject, and on the 23d of September, 1766, he cut his throat.

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

(1715-1785.)

William Whitehead was born at Cambridge in 1715, the son of a master baker, who died when the boy was at school, leaving his widow involved in debt, the result of his extravagance or folly. Some acres of land near Grandchester, on which he expended considerable sums of money without any probability of return, are yet known by the name of "Whitehead's Folly."

At the age of fourteen the boy obtained a nomination to Winchester School. Leaving Winchester School, he returned to Cambridge, where he obtained a humble scholarship founded for the sons of bakers by Mr. Thomas Pyke, at Clare Hall. Here some specimens of his poetry at school (which had attracted the favourable notice of Pope), combined with his amiable manners and intelligent conversation to recommend him to the special notice of several very distinguished contemporaries. The production with which, in Mr. Mason's opinion, he commenced a poet, was his *Epistle on the Danger of Writing in Verse*, which obtained general admiration, and was highly approved by Pope; but the *Tale of Atys and Adrastus*, his next publication, is altogether superior. The *Essay on Ridicule*, published in 1743, is by far the best of his didactic pieces, and one upon which his biographer thinks he bestowed great pains.

In 1739 he took his degree of bachelor of arts, in 1742 was elected a fellow of his college, and in 1743 was admitted master of arts, and took orders, but did not proceed to enter the church, becoming about this time tutor in the family of the Earl of Jersey. This position enabled him to frequent the theatre, long a cherished object, his taste tending strongly to dramatic composition. Immediately on coming to town he had written a little ballad farce, *The Edinburgh Ball*, in ridicule of the young Pretender, which, however, was never performed or printed. He then began a regular tragedy, *The Roman Father*, adapted from Corneille's *Horace*, which was produced on the stage in 1750. He appears to have viewed the difficulties of a first attempt with a wary eye, and had the precaution to make himself known to the public by the lines addressed to Dr. Hoadly. The play long retained its place on the stage.

The tragedy of *Creusa* followed in 1754. The subject is taken from the *Ion* of Euripides; but with various alterations, which, at all events as to the English rendering, are improvements. The language and

the poetry are striking, the situations good, and the interest well maintained.

When Lord Jersey thought the time arrived for completing his son's education by foreign observation, Mr. Whitehead accompanied the young man on his travels; Viscount Nuneham, son of Earl Harcourt, making the tour with them. On their return, Whitehead was gratified with the appointment of Secretary and Registrar of the Order of the Bath, which, during his absence, Lady Jersey had obtained for him. He continued, however, to reside in Lord Jersey's family, with occasional intervals, when he visited the country seat of Lord Harcourt, who was also greatly attached to him.

In 1757, upon the death of Cibber, he was appointed poet laureat, a position which involved him in the hostility of various poetic personages, disappointed candidates for the office, whose assaults he withstood well enough; but in 1762 the rabid satire of Churchill sorely smote his reputation.

His health began to decline about his seventieth year, and in 1785 he was carried off by a complaint in his chest. His death was sudden, and his peaceable life was closed without a groan.

RICHARD JAGO.

(1715-1781.)

Richard, the third son of the Rev. Richard Jago, rector of Beaudesart in Warwickshire, was born October 1st, 1715. He took his master's degree July 9th, 1738, having entered into the church the year before, and served the curacy of Snitterfield, near Stratford-upon-Avon.

For several years after his marriage, in 1743, he resided at Harbury, to which living he was presented in 1746; and which, with the living of Chesterton, at a small distance thence, did not together produce more than 100*l.* a year. In 1751 he had lost his wife, and was left with seven very young children.

In 1754 he obtained the vicarage of Snitterfield, worth about 140*l.* Some of his smaller poems had before this time been inserted in Dodsley's collection; but he put in for higher claims by publishing the poem of *Edge Hill* in the year 1767; and in 1768 his more popular fable of *Labour and Genius*. In 1771 he was presented by Lord Willoughby de Broke to the living of Kilmcote, worth near 300*l.* a year, and he was thus enabled to maintain his family with ease and comfort.

During the latter part of his life, when the infirmities of age made their approach, he resided almost entirely at Snitterfield, where he amused himself with improving the vicarage-house and ornamenting his grounds; a taste he probably caught from Shenstone, but which he contrived to indulge at a much less expense. He died after a short illness, May 8th, 1781.

In 1784, his poems, which are of a humble class enough, were reprinted, as corrected, improved, and enlarged by the author a short time before his death, with some additional pieces.



THOMAS GRAY.*

(1716-1771.)

Thomas Gray, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eton under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, then assistant to Dr. George; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but Gray seems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived sullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the common law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whose friendship he had gained at Eton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's letters contain a very pleasing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendships are easily dis-

* Johnson.

solved : at Florence they quarrelled, and parted ; and Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look, however, without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troubleseme and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel ; and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.

He returned to England in September 1741 ; and in about two months afterwards buried his father, who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became bachelor of civil law, and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or professing to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which he shows in his letters, and in the *Ode to May*, which Mr. Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of *Agrippina*, a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgment of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that *Agrippina* was never finished.

In this year (1742) Gray seems to have applied himself seriously to poetry ; for in this year were produced the *Ode to Spring*, his *Prospect of Eton*, and his *Ode to Adversity*. He began likewise a Latin Poem, *De Principiis Cogitandi*.

It may be collected from the narrative of Mr. Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry : perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design ; for, though there is at present some embarrassment in his phrase, and some harshness in his lyric numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very few possess ; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself ; when Mr. Mason, being elected Fellow of Pembroke Hall, brought him a companion, who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger, and the coldness of a critic.

In his retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the *Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat* ; and the year afterwards attempted a poem, of more importance, on *Government and Education*, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed *Elegy in the Church-*

yard, which, finding its way into a magazine, first, I believe, made him known to the public.*

An invitation from Lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to an odd composition called *A Long Story*, which adds little to Gray's character.

Several of his pieces were published (1753), with designs by Mr. Bentley; and, that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.



STOKE POGIS.

Some time afterwards (1756), some young men of the college, whose chambers were near his, diverted themselves with disturbing

* "This is a very great poetical curiosity. Many variations and emendations occur in the printed copy from this early sketch: the names of Milton and Cromwell are judiciously substituted for Tully and Cæsar. The diction is frequently strengthened and improved, and transpositions of the stanzas occur. The manuscript contains the five stanzas omitted in all the editions of Gray's poems, but quoted by Matthias in his *Notes on Gray*, vol. i. p. 125-7, where he very justly observes, 'I cannot help hinting to the reader, that I think the third of these rejected stanzas equal to any in the whole elegy.' The fervent admirers of the bard will regret the absence of any one of these beautiful lines. The original title given to the elegy in the MS. is, *Stanzas wrote in a Country Churchyard*."—*Note by Evans to the Manuscript of the Poem in his Sale-Catalogue.*

him by frequent and troublesome noises, and, as is said, by pranks yet more offensive and contemptuous. This insolence, having endured it a while, he represented to the governors of the society, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke Hall.

In 1757 he published *The Progress of Poetry* and *The Bard*, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement.* Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them; though Warburton said that they were understood as well as the works of Milton and Shakespeare, which it is the fashion to admire. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect; and in a short time many were content to be shown beauties which they could not see.†

Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

* The following note by Evans, to an article in one of his sale-catalogues, is of interest:

"Gray's Odes. With numerous MS. notes by Gray, Strawberry-hill, 1757. This is one of the most interesting articles ever sold, as it contains the author's avowal of the sources from which he borrowed his ideas. From the natural diffidence of Gray, he had too much delicacy to imagine that the public would require any explanation of his text; but the remarks he has made on these two odes will induce many to regret that he had not more elaborately illustrated his other poems. He states at the commencement, that 'these odes were published August 8, 1757: the author was at first advised (even by his friends) to subjoin some few explanatory notes; but had too much respect for the understanding of his readers to take that liberty.' In the first ode,

'Awake, Æolian lyre, awake!'

he alludes to the Psalm, 'Awake, my glory! awake, lute and harp! I myself will awake right early; and also to a passage in Pindar. In two other stanzas he also refers to Pindar on the 'power of harmony,' borrowed from the Pythian of Pindar; and observes, 'this is almost a translation (though a weak one) of some inimitable lines in the same ode.' On 'Night and all her sickly dews,' he remarks, most beautifully, 'To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given us by the same Providence that sends the cheerful presence of the day to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night.' There are some interesting observations upon Dryden's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*; and also on Pope's, 'unworthy of so great a man.' 'Two coursers of ethereal race,' &c., Gray says, 'meant to show the majestic march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes.' In the second most exquisite ode,

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!' &c.

Gray acknowledges his obligations to Shakespeare, Dryden, Cowley, and Spenser. He also states that he has copied some ideas from Raphael's *Vision of Ezekiel*, from an ancient Scaldic ode; and assigns his reason for giving the 'double cadence' in the third stanza. He has marked the musical time."—*Note by Evans to the article in his Sale-Catalogue.*

† "It may so happen that a writer, from a happy circumstance, may acquire a reputation as just as it is instantaneous. This was the case with the late Mr. Gray, who, by his happening to be conversant in fashionable company, gained a complete century in point of reputation. For though fashionable writers are most justly set in opposition to good, the very epithet implying that their works will not last, yet fashion is now and then in the right, as well as other fools."—PINKERTON, *Letters of Literature*, p. 108.

His curiosity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided nearly three years, reading and transcribing ; and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on *Oblivion* and *Obscurity*, in which his lyric performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Professor of Modern History at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, "cockered and spirited up," till he asked it of Lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal ; and the place was given to Mr. Bocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and, believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant ; for, as his comprehension was ample, his



GRAY'S MONUMENT.

curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuse.

What he had formerly solicited in vain was at last given him without solicitation. The professorship of history became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the Duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglect of duty, and appeasing his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a resolution which he believed himself to have made of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited (1769) Westmorland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach; and, yielding to no medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a letter written to my friend Mr. Boswell, by the Rev. Mr. Temple, rector of St. Gluvias in Cornwall; and am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to believe it true.

"Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening. With such a fund of knowledge, his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had, in some degree, that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve: though he seemed to value others chiefly according to the progress that they had made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be considered merely as a man of letters; and, though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman, who read for his amusement. Perhaps it may be said, what signifies so much knowledge, when it produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorials but a few poems? But let it be considered that Mr. Gray was to others at least innocently employed; to himself certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably: he was every day making some new acquisition in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask; and he was taught to consider every thing as trifling, and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue, in that state wherein God hath placed us."

To this character Mr. Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most "before those whom he did not wish to please;" and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me from the slight inspection of his letters in which my undertaking has engaged me is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgment cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all; but that he was fastidious and hard to please. His contempt, however, is often employed where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism and infidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

"You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you: first, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe any thing at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road even when that road leads no where; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter, for a new road has become an old one."

Mr. Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that, though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money;* and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion, not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times or at happy moments; a fantastic foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and virtue wishes him to have been superior.

Gray's poetry is now to be considered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode *On Spring* has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives derived from substantives the termination of participles, such as 'the *cultured* plain,' 'the *daisied* bank;' but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, 'the *honied* spring.' The morality is natural, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem *On the Cat* was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle; but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza, "the azure flowers that blow" show how resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made

* He was not, however, as Mason more emphatically puts it, "too high-minded to receive remuneration for his productions," since, at a sale of autographs in 1836, Mr. Wilks bought (for eight guineas) Gray's assignment, dated 29th June, 1751, of his two odes, *The Progress of Poetry* and *The Bard*, for forty guineas.

when it cannot easily be found. Selima, the cat, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is no good use made of it when it is done; for of the two lines,

“ What female heart can gold despise !
What cat’s averse to fish ? ”

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that “ a favourite has no friend ; ” but the last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose : if what “ glistered ” had been “ gold,” the cat would not have gone into the water ; and if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The *Prospect of Eton College* suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to Father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile : Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet “ buxom health ” is not elegant ; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use : finding in Dryden “ honey redolent of spring,” an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making “ gales ” to be “ redolent of joy and youth.”

Of the *Ode on Adversity* the hint was at first taken from *O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium* ; but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not, by slight objections, violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the “ wonderful wonder of wonders,” the two sister odes ; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of *The Progress of Poetry*.

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of “ spreading sound and running water.” A “ stream of music ” may be allowed ; but where does “ music,” however “ smooth and strong,” after having visited the “ verdant vales, rowl down the steep again,” so as that “ rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar ? ” If this be said of music, it is nonsense ; if it be said of water, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars’ car and Jove’s eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a school-boy to his commonplaces.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia’s “ velvet green ” has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from nature ennobles art : an epithet or metaphor drawn from art degrades nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. “ Many-twinkling ” was formerly censured as not analogical ; we may say “ many-spotted,” but scarcely “ many-spotting.” This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been crossed by Hyperion ; the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of poetry ; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not arise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of "Glory and generous Shame." But that poetry and virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with "Delphi," and "Egean," and "Ilissus," and "Meander," and "hallowed fountains," and "solemn sound ;" but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away. His position is at last false : in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom we derived our first school of poetry, Italy was overrun by "tyrant power" and "coward vice ;" nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true ; but it is not said happily : the real effects of this poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless ; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar ; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original ; and if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgment is right. There is in *The Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent ; and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible ; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi*.

To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty ; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use ; we are affected only as we believe ; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes ; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated ; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*,

"Is there ever a man in all Scotland"—

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, "ruin, ruthless, helm or hauberk," are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza the Bard is well described ; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that "Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main," and that "Modred made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head," attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding-sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the Northern bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the act of spinning the thread of life is in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous: Gray has made weavers of slaughtered bards by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to "weave the warp, and weave the woof," perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men weave the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought by the admission of its wretched correspondent, "give ample room and verge enough."* He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how "towers are fed." But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example: but suicide is always to be had, without expense of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. "Double, double, toil and trouble." He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature.†

To say that he has no beauties would be unjust; a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

His translations of Northern and Welsh Poetry deserve praise: the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his *Elegy* I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The *Churchyard* abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning, "Yet even these bones," are to me original: I have never seen the notions in any

* "I have a soul, that like an *ample* shield
Can take in all, and *verge enough* for more."

DRYDEN'S *Sebastian*.

† Lord Orford used to assert that Gray "never wrote any thing easily but things of humour;" and added, that humour was his natural and original turn.

other place ; yet he that reads them here persuades himself that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him.

An interesting essay on Gray by the Earl of Carlisle is prefixed to the edition of his poems by Moultrie.

RICHARD OWEN CAMBRIDGE.

(1717-1802.)

Richard Cambridge, the son of a Turkey merchant in London, was born in that city, Feb. 14, 1717. His father dying while he was quite a child, he was sent by his maternal uncle, Mr. Owen, to Eton, and thence, as a gentleman-commoner, to St. John's College, Oxford. In 1737 he entered at Lincoln's Inn, but without any professional views ; for, marrying in 1741, he retired to his family seat of Whitminster, in Gloucestershire, where he amused himself with literature, and in heightening the beauties of the scenery around his mansion. To this purpose, he made the little river Stroud navigable for some distance ; and not only constructed boats for pleasure and carriage, but introduced some mechanical improvements into that branch of naval architecture, which were much approved by the most competent judges. In one of his barges he received the Prince and Princess of Wales, who were delighted with the elegance of his taste, and the novelty and utility of his various plans. He devoted much of his time also to archery, and made a curious collection of ancient bows, of various construction, which he afterwards sent to the Leverian Museum. In 1748 he succeeded to the estates of his uncle, Mr. Owen, whose name he prefixed to his own ; and he then removed to London, whence, in two years, he retired to Twickenham, where he purchased a villa opposite Richmond Hill, where he lived in elegant and hospitable retirement until his death, on 17th September, 1802.

He had, while at Oxford, composed verses *On the Marriage of the Prince of Wales*, and other effusions ; and while at Whitminster, his principal poem, *The Scribleriad* ; but it was not until 1751 that he was induced by his friends—among whom were the leading men of the day, in rank, politics, and literature—to publish this work. *The Scribleriad*, in which Cambridge took up Scriblerus where Arbuthnot left him, is a failure as a whole ; but the versification is smooth, and the language effective. Mr. Cambridge was the author also of several minor poems, of twenty-one papers in *The World* (among the best in that collection), and of *A History of the War upon the Coast of Coromandel*.

WILLIAM COLLINS.*

(1720-1756.)

William Collins was born at Chichester, on the 25th day of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation, an alderman of the city. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warburton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the public by some verses *To a Lady weeping*, published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

In 1740 he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College, but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was, in about half a year, elected a demy of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pockets. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution; or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his scheme, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation or remote inquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of his history was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.†

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of *Aristotle's Poetics*, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He showed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study* than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities,—disease and insanity.

* Johnson.

† His odes, descriptive and allegorical, were published in 1746. Their sale was by no means successful. A complete edition of his poetical works, with a memoir by Langhorne, was published in 1765.

Having formerly written his character,* while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

"This was, however, the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness and the novelty of extravagance were always desired by him, but not always attained. Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious. In a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed almost unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds, which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death, in 1756, came to his relief.†

* In the *Poetical Calendar*, a collection of poems by Fawkes and Woty, in several volumes, 1763, &c.

† Langhorne, knowing that Collins was buried at Chichester, travelled thither to visit the grave of his favourite poet. On inquiry, he found that Mr. Collins was interred in a sort of garden, surrounded by the cloister of the

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself; but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that is the best.'"

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his oriental eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatic manners, and called them his Irish eclogues. He showed them, at the same time, an ode inscribed to Mr. John Hume, on the superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.*

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than his intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burdensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order; seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

Mr. Collins's first production is added here from the *Poetical Calendar*.

"TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

"On her weeping at her Sister's Wedding.

"Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy state;

cathedral, which is called the Paradise; and into this burial-ground he was admitted by the sexton, and duly indulged his enthusiasm. In the evening he supped with an inhabitant of the city, and, describing to him the spot sacred to his story, he was told that his effusions of feeling had not been misapplied, for he had been lamenting a very honest man, and a very useful member of society—Mr. Collins the tailor.

* It is printed in the late collection.

You may be happy in your turn,
 And seize the treasure you regret.
 With Love united Hymen stands,
 And softly whispers to your charms,
 'Meet but your lover in my bands,
 You'll find your sister in his arms.'"

THOMAS BLACKLOCK.

(1721-1791.)

Thomas Blacklock was born in 1721, at Annan in Dumfriesshire, the son of a bricklayer. Before he was six months old, he lost his sight by small-pox. His friends endeavoured to lessen the calamity by reading those books which might convey the instruction suitable to infancy; and later, by the application of his memory, rendered more acute by the absence of vision, he acquired in this way a knowledge of the leading English poets, and even, to a certain extent, of the Latin tongue. Some poetical efforts of his own, when quite a youth, having been shown to Dr. Stevenson, a benevolent physician of Edinburgh, that gentleman undertook the charge of the poor lad, who had now lost his father; and removing him to Edinburgh, placed him at the University, where, by means similar to those already employed, he completed his education. A volume of his poems was published in 1746; but their merits, and, still more to the purpose, the remarkable circumstances under which they were composed, were not known to the English public until 1754, when Mr. Spence, editing a new edition of them, prefixed an account of the author's life and character, the interesting nature of which secured a considerable subscription for a quarto edition that was published by Dodsley. In 1759, Blacklock was licensed as a preacher of the Scottish Church, in which profession he acquired considerable reputation, enhanced, no doubt, by the general admiration of the patient energy by which he had so largely countervailed the physical calamity with which he had been visited. In 1762 he married Miss Sarah Johnston, the daughter of a surgeon at Dumfries, a very worthy but homely woman. Our poet, however, who saw her visage only in his mind, used to rave, with most extravagant ecstasy, about her beauty; so that, in this one particular, his blindness was an advantage to both parties. About the same time, Lord Selkirk presented him to the living of Kircudbright; but the parishioners stoutly resisted the proposition of being led by a blind man, and, after a two years' controversy, induced Blacklock to resign the living, and to accept a small annuity instead. With this moderate pension he settled in Edinburgh, where he made up a living by receiving young gentlemen as boarders, and occasional pupils. In 1767 the University of Aberdeen conferred upon him the degree of D.D.

In 1767 he published *Paraclesis, or Consolations deduced from Nature and Revealed Religion*, in two dissertations, one original, the other translated from the Latin of Vigonius of Padua. In 1768 he sent forth, translated from the French, *Two Discourses on the Spirit*

and *Evidence of Christianity*. Another work from his pen, able in itself, and interesting from its circumstances, is the article "Blindness" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Our author's last publication was *The Graham*, an heroic poem in four cantos, designed to promote harmony between the English and the Scotch.

Dr. Blacklock died of fever, July 7, 1791. His poetry—which Mr. Henry Mackenzie and Mr. Spence, who, as friendly biographers, had to make out a case, laud to the skies—has long since been shelved.

WILLIAM WILKIE.

(1721-1772.)

William Wilkie was born at Dalmeny, West Lothian, October 5, 1721. His father, a small farmer, gave him a liberal education, which he improved by diligence. At thirteen he was sent to the University of Edinburgh, where he was soon distinguished for originality of thought and rapid progress in learning. Among his associates here were Robertson, Home, Hume, Ferguson, and Adam Smith, with whom he continued in habits of friendship and correspondence for many years.

Before he completed his education his father died, leaving him no other inheritance than his small farm. Necessity thus turned his attention to agriculture, which he cultivated with much success, though still prosecuting his studies. At the accustomed time he was admitted a preacher in the church of Scotland; though he had no cure of souls for some years, maintaining himself and his sisters on his farm. His *great* poem was the *Epigoniad*, an exceedingly heavy epic. However, as Mr. Southey writes, "whatever nationality could do for this poem was done. Hume recommended it to the *Critical Review* as one of the ornaments of our language; Smollett enumerated it among the glories of George II.'s reign; and the author is called the Scottish Homer. All would not do. The fable is well invented, but it is dull; the verses respectable, but dull; the author learned, but dull; and dulness is the poetical sin for which there is no redemption.

Wilkie, however, wrote the poem as the most probable means of recommending himself to the notice of the great. He composed an epic poem upon the speculation of getting preferment. Preferment, however, came before he had elaborated the work; Lord Lauderdale giving him the benefice of Ratho, where his eccentricities were more conspicuous than any other characteristic.

In 1759, being chosen professor of natural philosophy in the University of St. Andrew's, he removed thither, and purchased a few acres of land in the neighbourhood, which he cultivated with his usual success. In 1766 the University conferred on him the degree of D.D.

He died, after a lingering illness, October 10, 1772, worth 3000*l.*, the result of extraordinary management and economy.

In person (adds Southey) he was slovenly, dirty, and even nauseous; he abhorred nothing so much as clean sheets. One evening,

at Hatton, being asked by Lady Lauderdale to stay all night, he expressed an attachment to his own bed, but said, if her ladyship would give him a pair of foul sheets, he would stay.

But there are honourable traits in Wilkie's character : his talents made him the best farmer in his neighbourhood ; his honesty, the worst dealer in the market. He was parsimonious ; and parsimony must be ascribed to him as a virtue ; for he had been obliged to borrow ten pounds for his father's burial, and had been refused the loan by his uncle : he provided for his sisters, and was known to be charitable when he had amassed money.

Wilkie said nobody could venture to cope with him in conversation : both his manner and thoughts were masculine in a degree peculiar to himself. It is extraordinary, however, that no trace of this manliness or originality is to be found in his writings ; but it is still more extraordinary that a man should have been able to write verses at all, who could not read them without violating all metre and all melody by the grossest mistakes in quantity and pronunciation. His *Fables* are even worse than his *Epigoniad*.

JOSEPH WARTON.

(1722-1800.)

Joseph, elder brother of Thomas Warton, was born at Dunsfold, Surrey, in 1722. In his fourteenth year he was admitted on the foundation of Winchester School, whence, in 1740, he proceeded to Oriel College, where, as relaxations from severer studies, he completed several of his poems commenced at school, among which were *The Enthusiast*, or *the Lover of Nature*, and *The Dying Indian*, with a prose satire entitled *Ranelagh House*. He likewise sketched an allegorical work of a more elaborate kind, which he did not find time or inclination to complete. On taking his bachelor's degree in 1744, he was ordained to his father's curacy at Basingstoke, and officiated there till February 1746 ; he next removed to the duty of Chelsea, whence, in order to effect his recovery from the small-pox, he went to Chobham. About this time he contributed to Dodsley's Museum, *Superstition*, an ode, and *Stanzas on taking the Air after Illness*.

In 1748 he was presented by the Duke of Bolton to the rectory of Winslade, a small preferment, but sufficient, in the recipient's opinion, to justify his marrying a lady to whom he had been for some time attached. In 1751 the same nobleman invited him to accompany him on a tour to the south of France ; the object being, that he might have a Protestant clergyman at hand to marry him to the actress with whom he had long been living, whenever the duchess, then in a confirmed dropsy, should die. Mr. Warton did not even get pecuniary profit by this discreditable compliance with his patron's vices ; for having occasion to return to England before the duchess had obliged her husband in the one particular he desired, the ceremony was performed in his absence by another clergyman.

Dr. Warton, in 1753, added greatly to his reputation as a scholar and a critic by a translation of the *Georgics* and *Bucolics* of Virgil, accompanying Pitt's version of the *Æneid*. The University of Ox-

ford conferred upon him the degree of M.A. by diploma, in testimony of their high opinion of this valuable production. In 1753, also, Mr. Warton, at the request of his friend Dr. Johnson, commenced a series of contributions, in the class of criticism, to the *Adventurer*. These papers, twenty-four in number, are among the most important and most interesting contents of the periodical which they adorn.

About the same time he contemplated a history of the "Revival of Learning," one leading feature of which was to have been select epistles of Politian, Erasmus, Grotius, and others, with notes; but the design was unfortunately abandoned. In 1754 Mr. Warton was presented to the living of Tunworth; and in 1755 became second master of Winchester School. Succeeding to the head-mastership in 1766, an office for which his solid learning, his urbanity of manners, his tact in discovering, and his skill in developing, the qualities of the youths placed under him, peculiarly fitted him. He resigned the situation in 1793, receiving the earnest thanks of the wardens and the authorities of the school for his distinguished conduct of its important functions, and retired to the rectory of Wickham, which, with the rectory of Upham and the prebendal stalls in St. Paul's and Winchester, had recently been awarded to his merits. He had edited an edition of Pope, and was engaged on an edition of Dryden, when death closed his useful and honourable career on February 23d, 1800: he was buried in Winchester cathedral; and a handsome monument by Flaxman was placed over his remains by the Wykhamists.

Dr. Warton wrote several poems besides those already mentioned, and a very valuable essay on the genius and writings of Pope. His *Ode to Fancy* is among the most pleasing of his poetical effusions.

WILLIAM MASON.

(1725-1797.)

William Mason, son of the vicar of St. Trinity, in Yorkshire, was born in that place, 1725. He proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge, in his eighteenth year, having already combined painting and poetry with the commoner details of education. While at college he wrote a monody on Pope, where he absurdly elevated that poet above Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton; but, as Southey says, he lived to be wiser. In 1749 he became M.A., and obtained, through the interest of his friend Gray the poet, a fellowship of Pembroke Hall.

As a crusher of Jacobite Oxford, our Whig poet wrote *Isis*, a poem which did not crush Oxford. The author, however, had always a notion that it had produced an immense sensation in the assailed city; so that, many years after, on entering Oxford with a friend, he congratulated himself that the evening was dark. "Why?" asked his friend. "What!" whispered Mason, "don't you remember my *Isis*?" In 1753 he published *Elfrida*, a tragedy written on the model of the Greek drama, which he had made up his mind was perfectly practicable on the modern stage. It was *got up* with fine scenery, decorations, and characteristic music (by Arne), at Drury Lane; but the success by no means answered the author's expecta-

tions, who, of course, attributed the comparative failure to certain alterations that Colman had made, with a view to stage feasibility. Mason was very furious; but Colman silenced him by a threat of a burlesque, with Greek washerwomen. *Elfrida*, however, though not an acting play, has considerable merit as a dramatic poem.

In 1754 Mason went into orders, and was appointed one of the chaplains to the king, by the patronage of Lord Holderness, whose chaplain he also became, whom he accompanied on a foreign tour, and who gave him the living of Aston. In 1756 he sent forth four odes on *Independence*, *Memory*, *Melancholy*, and *The Fall of Tyranny*, the main merit of which was that they afforded effective subjects for amusing parodies by Colman and Lloyd. In 1759 *Caractacus* was published, which, though, like *Elfrida*, and for the same reason, no acting play, is highly esteemed as a poem, and by Campbell is preferred to the tragedy of Beaumont and Fletcher on the same subject, in the leading respect, that it brings forward the persons and abodes of the Druids with more magnificent effect. In 1775 was published his *Memoirs and Letters of Gray*, compiled from the papers which, with 500*l.*, his deceased friend had bequeathed to him. His *English Garden* (published in detail in 1772, 1777, 1779, and 1782,) is a very dull affair; though Mr. Warton, with an air of entire gravity, pronounces it the perfection of didactic poetry.

Mason's Whig principles, which he manfully adhered to, creating a certain distaste towards him "in the highest quarter," at that time especially out of sorts by reason of the American war, the royal chaplaincy was resigned; and our poet, rendered more elastic in spirit by the relief, sent forth a great deal of very pleasant and very telling whiggery, under the pseudonyme of Malcolm Macgregor. The author of *Caractacus* was long unrecognised as the writer of the *Heroic Epistle to Sir W. Chambers*.

In 1783 appeared our poet's translation of Dufresnoy's metrical treatise on painting; a version manifesting Mason's critical knowledge of his subject, and enriched with illustrative notes by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Mr. Mason's last works were, *An Ode on the Commemoration of the British Revolution*; a memoir of his friend Whitehead; and, an interesting proof of the variety of his accomplishments, an *Historical and Critical Essay on English Church Music*, which Dr. Burney speaks of in very respectful terms. It is singular, however, as Campbell pleasantly points out, that the fault ascribed by the doctor to Mason's musical theory should be that of Calvinistic plainness; so that whereas in verse he was my Lord Peter, in his taste for sacred music he was Jack in the *Tale of a Tub*.

Mr. Mason died in 1797 of mortification of the leg, occasioned by an accident.

END OF VOL. III.

